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Exploring Generative Social Fields in Education During a Relational Competence Training

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"Out beyond ideas of rightdoing and wrongdoing
there is a field. I'll meet you there."

Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī

Dedicated to the bold vulnerability of
truly showing up to the meeting.

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1. Introduction

Humanity faces complex and intersecting crises such as climate change, biodiversity loss, artificial intelligence, and growing polarization and inequalities. These challenges are putting immense pressure on societal institutions, including schools, which play a crucial role in preparing the next generation for their thriving in life (OECD 2019). Amid this situation, the health of educators is at risk, as they have been experiencing high burnout rates (Agyapong et al. 2022; Seibt and Kreuzfeld 2021), especially during the pandemic (Steigleder et al. 2023; Westphal et al. 2022). Therefore, it is imperative to promote the well-being and health of both educators and students, equipping schools to tackle these challenges.

A promising but underutilized intervention approach is addressing the quality of the relationships between educators and students within schools. Research indicates that the quality of the relationships not only affects student learning (García-Rodríguez et al. 2022; Roorda et al. 2017; Roorda et al. 2011) but also impacts the well-being of both students (Lei et al. 2016) and educators (Spilt et al. 2011). Positive relationships can enhance well-being for educators (Spilt et al. 2011), while difficult ones can lead to stress and burnout (Aloe et al. 2014; Shirom et al. 2009). Stress in educators, in turn, decreases their ability to support and attune to students (Braun et al. 2019), perpetuating a cycle of declining relationship quality and well-being ('burnout cascades', Jennings and Greenberg (2009)). This cycle is further fueled by emotional contagion, where stress and burnout spread from one person to other (Oberle and Schonert-Reichl 2016).

In contrast, evidence suggests that teachers' capacity to establish positive relationships with students can buffer stress and increase resilience (Baker 2006; Burchinal et al. 2002; Dearing et al. 2016). Therefore, supporting educators' relational competences appears as a promising way to prevent burnout and stress in educators while potentially also improving student learning and well-being (Oliveira et al. 2021a; Oliveira et al. 2021b). Fostering relational competence may provide internal resources and protective factors for educators, such as stress regulation abilities (Oliveira et al. 2021b), and external ones, such as positive relationships with students that protect against stress-inducing and escalatory relational dynamics (Aldrup et al. 2018).

Despite being crucial for educators' professionalism (Nordenbo et al. 2008), relational competences have not been adequately supported in their professional training to date (Schonert-Reichl et al. 2015). Therefore, there is a need to better understand how relational competences of in-service educators and the quality of relationships at schools can be supported through targeted interventions.

To address this gap in knowledge, this study explored how educators and school leaders experienced and enacted changes in their relationships at school during the 'Empathie macht Schule' (EMS) training program, an intervention aimed at promoting relational competence. The EMS program adopted a 'whole-school approach' design, involving the school staff including teachers, childcare workers, and other professionals across three elementary

schools. The training comprised six three-day modules designed to support the cultivation of relational competence alongside so-called 'innate competences' including mindfulness, somatic awareness, compassion for self and others, and creativity (Juul et al 2012), followed by a period of supervision and collegial support.

The study is part of an overarching research project by the Institute for Medical Psychology at the University Hospital Heidelberg (German title: 'Ein Ganzheitlicher Ansatz zur Entwicklung von Beziehungskompetenz & Empathie. Longitudinale Studie zur multimodalen Evaluation eines Empathie-Trainings in Grundschulen'). The research project adopted a mixed-methods design (Creswell 2014) to evaluate the EMS intervention quantitatively, comparing changes in educator and student outcomes to a non-treatment control group (outcome evaluation), and qualitatively, exploring the complex change processes elicited during EMS at the schools (process research).

To thoroughly investigate these multi-faceted and context dependent relational shifts (Pennings 2017; Pianta et al. 2012), the study adopted a novel approach: The social fields perspective (Pomeroy and Herrmann 2023). This framework considers relational competence as not solely located within individuals but enacted and embedded in the actors' intertwinements with each other and their contexts, here termed 'social fields'. Social fields are shaped by the actors and their mutual bodily resonance, giving rise to the experienced 'quality' and atmosphere of a social setting. This atmosphere has an immediate affordance (Gibson 1979) for the actors shaping their affective and behavioral tendencies. Thereby, the social field between the actors has an autonomous and self-sustaining property (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007), contributing to self-reinforcing interaction cycles such as the 'burnout cascades' mentioned above. This thesis is – to the best knowledge of the author – the first empirical study utilizing this conceptual lens to study social fields and their potential shifts towards more generative qualities.

The study distinguishes two levels of social fields relevant to the whole-school intervention (adapted from Bronfenbrenner 2000), micro-level change processes between educators, students, and parents, and meso-level change processes among the faculty and between faculty and school leaders. Both levels may undergo changes during the intervention, and hence, both are explored. Moreover, the micro-meso-distinction will serve as an organizing principle throughout the literature review, results section, and discussion.

Following this introduction, the background and state of research on relationships at schools at the micro- and meso-levels are presented. This chapter offers insights into associations with educator and student outcomes and the effectiveness of interventions that promote relational competences. The subsequent chapter introduces the social fields framework, drawing from various disciplines like phenomenology, social psychology, systems theory, and organizational development. Synthesizing this novel concept, the properties of social fields enable a refined investigation of the relational processes between school educators and other actors in the system.

The methodology chapter outlines the research design, data collection, and analysis methods, including details about the EMS intervention. The results section presents findings from the qualitative analysis, including reported shifts in the social fields between actors in schools, themes concerning educators' experiences of cultivating relational competences throughout the training program, and factors influencing the implementation process of the program.

In the discussion, the results are contextualized within the research on relationships at schools, and the study's strengths and weaknesses are addressed. The implications for both research and practice are explored, underscoring the significance of cultivating both intra- and inter-personal aspects of relational competences to foster generative social fields in schools.

2. Theoretical and Empirical Background Concerning Relationships at School

This chapter examines and synthesizes international research on relationships at schools. Starting from an overall rationale related to the importance of the relationship between student and educator, the chapter will review literature concerning the relational quality and climate among and between these actors on multiple levels (2.1.). The review will first address the teacher student relationship and how this relationship interacts with student and teacher outcomes (2.1.1.). From a systems perspective, this must, however, be seen in the context of the school and its climate including the relationships among faculty (2.1.2.). Following this, the specific notion of relational competence is presented (2.2.1), as well as what is known from research about interventions aiming to improve it (2.2.2.) and, furthermore, theoretical reflections and empirical factors shaping the implementation of such programs (2.2.3.). Based on this review, the concept of the social field will be outlined as an integrative theoretical framework for this thesis.

2.1. Relationships at School

Education is often conceived as an intrinsically relational process, as elucidated by Biesta (2004):

> "We should take the idea that education consists of the interaction between the teacher and the learner absolutely seriously. We should take it in its most literal sense. If we do so, it follows that education is located not in the activities of the teacher, nor in the activities of the learner, but in the interaction between the two itself. Education, in other words, takes place in the gap between the teacher and the learner." (Biesta 2004, pg. 12)

The importance of relationships in the education process, as emphasized in the quote, is not just a theoretical concept. Empirical research has firmly established its paramount significance for both students (Martin and Dowson 2009; Murray and Pianta 2007; Roorda et al. 2011; Sabol and Pianta 2012) and teachers (Hargreaves 2000; Hascher and

Waber 2021; Taxer et al. 2019). The following sections will review the literature on relationships at schools concerning micro-level, focusing on the teacher-student relationship and classroom relational climate, as well as the meso-level, exploring the school and faculty climate.

2.1.1. Micro-Level: Teacher-Student Relationship

Teacher-Student Relationship Effect on Students

The quality of the teacher-student relationship is associated with students' social-emotional development, well-being, and motivation to learn (Cornelius-White 2007; Martin and Dowson 2009; Roorda et al. 2011; Wubbels et al. 2016). Positive relationships may serve as a protective factor for at-risk students (Baker 2006; Burchinal et al. 2002; Dearing et al. 2016) while negative ones contribute to behavioral (Lei et al. 2016) as well as emotional and attention problems (Reinke et al. 2016).

The relationship between educators and students has been extensively studied through the lens of attachment theory (Bowlby 1979; Pianta et al. 2003). According to this theory, attachment is a deep and enduring bond that connects individuals, providing a sense of connectedness and safety which enables them to explore and take risks (Mitchell-Copeland et al. 1997; Murray and Greenberg 2000). Importantly, besides impacting students academically, the teacher-student relationship also serves as a conduit for the school's 'hidden curriculum,' (Martin 1976) which refers to the unintentional learning and socialization processes that occur in school. It is widely agreed that elementary school teachers can be considered as attachment figures for the students (García-Rodríguez et al. 2022). Hence, particularly in elementary school, students benefit from teachers who interact with them in a responsive and respectful manner, providing an emotional secure base for the students (Hamre and Pianta 2001; Hamre and Pianta 2005).

By showing what is referred to as 'teacher sensitivity', involving the ability to accurately detect and interpret children's emotional needs and to provide comfort and emotional support, teachers build a positive teacher-student relationship that enables students to feel safe, explore the learning environment, and engage in the lessons (Wubbels et al. 2016). Attachment-focused research typically assesses the affective quality of a teacher's relationship with a student based on three dimensions derived from parent-child attachment theory: closeness, which reflects warmth and openness; conflict, indicating discordant and coercive interactions; and dependency, referring to clingy behaviors of the child (Pianta 2001). Conflictual and distant relationships with teachers, marked by harsh reprimands and an irritable relational climate, can lead to disruptive behavior and problems with concentration and emotion regulation in students (Reinke et al. 2016). A meta-analysis of 57 studies involving 73,933 students found that the quality of the teacher-student relationship predicted students' behavioral expressions, including aggression and internalizing behaviors (Lei et al. 2016). The analysis showed that for at-risk students with challenging behavioral issues, the significance of the relationship with teachers is exacerbated. For these children, as

for the ones who are academically at risk, a, positive relationship can be a protective factor (Baker 2006; Burchinal et al. 2002; Dearing et al. 2016). Moreover, attachment also plays a crucial role in developing emotion regulation capacity, which is foundational for academic achievement and social-emotional competence (Bergin and Bergin 2009).

Research has shown that the affective qualities of the teacher-student relationship had a medium to large effect size on student engagement and a small to medium effect size on achievement: Roorda and colleagues (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of 99 studies involving pre-school to high-school students. The study found that relationships marked by negative affect had a stronger effect in primary school, highlighting the higher dependency of younger children on the relationship with their teachers. Therefore, it is crucial to cultivate close relationships between students and teachers early on, especially in early primary school, as this can have a lasting impact on student outcomes, such as social skills and academic achievement (Hamre and Pianta 2001; Pianta et al. 2003).

In conclusion, the teacher-student relationship plays a crucial role in creating a positive and supportive learning environment that benefits all students, particularly those who are academically or behaviorally at risk. Fostering positive teacher-student relationships early on is essential for lasting positive impacts on students' well-being and academic success.

Classroom Climate Effect on Students

In addition to the teacher-student relationship, another important concept in research on the relational quality at schools is the classroom climate. The classroom climate refers to the average emotional support experienced by students in a class (Buyse et al. 2008) and is associated with their academic (Pianta et al. 2008) and social emotional outcomes (Brophy-Herb et al. 2007; Mashburn et al. 2008). It captures an overlapping, yet distinct, aspect of the social life at school compared to the teacher-student relationship, also including students' peer relationships.

A positive classroom climate is characterized by warmth, respect, positive affect, teacher sensitivity, and low levels of anger, sarcasm, and irritability (Breeman et al. 2015; Buyse et al. 2008). Studies have shown that a supportive classroom climate is related to children's academic (Pianta et al. 2008) and social and behavioral outcomes (Mashburn et al. 2008), as well as higher ratings of students' social competence by teachers and independent observers, indicating its positive impact on students' social and behavioral outcomes (Brophy-Herb et al. 2007; Wilson et al. 2007).

While the classroom climate is important, a study by Rucinski (2018) and colleagues found that the specific teacher-student relationship plays a primary role in shaping children's social and emotional development and well-being. Higher child-reported relationship quality with teachers predicted lower child-reported depressive symptoms in spring, even when controlling for fall levels. Importantly, the study suggested that a supportive classroom climate cannot compensate for poor quality dyadic teacher-child relationships. This

underscores the significant influence of the individual child's relationship with the teacher on their well-being, which outweighs the overall emotional climate of the classroom.

In conclusion, these findings emphasize the crucial role of teachers' capacity to build and maintain positive relationships with each child individually. The teacher-student relationship has a profound impact on students' social and emotional development, and efforts to cultivate positive relationships with students are essential for creating a supportive learning environment.

Teacher-Student Relationship Effect on Teachers

The impact of the teacher-student relationship on educators' well-being has been increasingly studied, and there is growing empirical evidence that it is associated with various aspects of teachers' job satisfaction (Hargreaves 2000), emotional well-being (Hascher and Waber 2021), and engagement (Gastaldi et al. 2014; Klassen and Chiu 2011).

Positive relationships with students are crucial for teachers' motivation and enjoyment in their work (Hargreaves 2000). Conversely, conflicts, student misbehavior, and poor relationship quality contribute to reduced well-being, stress, and burnout among educators (Aldrup et al. 2018; Chang 2009; Fives et al. 2007; Klassen and Chiu 2011; Klusmann et al. 2012) and elevated stress and burnout symptoms (Aloe et al. 2014; Shirom et al. 2009).

The importance of these associations is emphasized by school teachers' elevated burnout risk, evidenced by a recent study of 6109 full-time and 5905 part-time teachers reporting that 47% of these German teachers demonstrated burnout symptoms and 3% had an indication of burnout (Seibt and Kreuzfeld 2021).

Educators' well-being is intricately linked with relationship quality. The perspectives of attachment theory (Bowlby 1979) and self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci 2002) posit that educators have a need for relatedness and belonging with their students. This idea was taken up by Spilt and colleagues (2011) who suggest that teachers' need of relatedness explains a portion of the impact that relationship quality has on teachers. In their analysis, Spilt and colleagues (2011) also articulate the idea that as attachment theory suggests, based on experiences with their interactions with students, teachers develop mental schemes of these interactions that guide their behavior subsequently. Hence, interaction patterns may feed forward and become self-sustaining. While this is a desirable mechanism in the case of positive interactions, it may also maintain negative patterns. This may concern for example burned-out teachers who have a diminished capacity to attune with students (Aloe et al. 2014). At worst, these factors can coalesce into 'burnout cascades', where teachers' difficulties in re-establishing healthy interactions with students reinforce troublesome student behavior, escalating on the teacher's side into reactive and excessively punitive responses fueling a self-sustaining cycle of classroom disruption. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) point out:

"Emotionally exhausted teachers are at risk of becoming cynical and callous and may eventually feel they have little to offer or gain from continuing, and so drop out of the teaching workforce. Others may stay—although unhappily—coping by maintaining a rigid classroom climate enforced by hostile and sometimes harsh measures bitterly working at a suboptimal level of performance until retirement." (Jennings and Greenberg 2009, pg. 492)

Furthermore, stress is not only caused by poor quality and conflict-prone relationships but it can also propagate throughout organizations in a process of emotion contagion (Barsade et al. 2018), where people tend to mimic and synchronize emotions with others. Oberle and Schonert-Reichl (2016) conducted an innovative study examining the associations between teacher burnout levels and students' physiological stress markers using multilevel modeling. The study analyzed data from 406 Canadian students in grades 4 to 7, with cortisol levels measured through saliva samples. The 17 classroom teachers completed subscales of the Maslach Burnout Inventory modified for teachers (Grayson and Alvarez 2008). The findings revealed that students' cortisol levels varied between classrooms (10% significant variability) suggesting that classroom features act as determinants for student stress. Moreover, the study identified a factor that crucially reduced this unexplained variability in cortisol from 10% to 4.6%.: teacher burnout. Teacher burnout was found to be associated with student morning (r= .248; p<.001).

The authors discuss two directions of causation: stressed-out children may contribute to a burnout-inducing work environment, or elevated morning cortisol in children may result from teacher burnout. Since the study was conducted at the start of the school year, the authors argue that teacher's burnout rates may unlikely result only from their current year's classroom. Based on findings that student cortisol levels can be altered by long-term but also immediate and short-term stressors, Oberle and Schonert-Reichl conclude that it is more likely that teacher burnout caused stress in students. The authors refer to stress contagion theory (Milkie and Warner 2011), which suggests that stress can 'cross over' from one person to another in a shared social setting.

The presented research findings support the view that both students and teachers are both affected by their relationship with one another. However, this should not be misleading about the asymmetrical nature of the relationship between teachers and students (Jensen et al. 2015). Numerous factors contribute to this power asymmetry, including students' developmental age and attachment needs, as well as their role as students involving the legal obligation to go to school and usually a lack of choice concerning the overall situation. By contrast, educators are adults that have chosen this profession but are not legally bound to continue. Moreover, the job of a teacher involves the power to evaluate the students' performance with far reaching consequences for students' career and life path. Consequently, students depend more strongly on the relationship but hardly possess any power to influence it. Therefore, it is the responsibility of educators to care for the quality of this relationship (Juul and Jensen 2017) (see Chapter 2.2.).

In conclusion, the teacher-student relationship plays a pivotal role in shaping teachers' well-being and job satisfaction. Nurturing positive relationships, reducing stress, and creating supportive classroom environments are essential steps towards promoting the overall well-being of educators and students. Moreover, promoting educators' well-being and stress-regulation may also facilitate supportive relationships with students and create a virtuous reinforcing cycle.

Collaboration with Parents

Collaboration between parents and teachers plays a crucial role in a child's education, especially during elementary school. However, there is a lack of research on this topic. In a qualitative study by Stauffer & Mason (2013), educators frequently expressed that collaborating with parents was a source of stress. They identified common themes such as perceived lack of parental support for student learning and general involvement in school, as well as facing excessive parental demands. Difficult communication with parents, the desire to please them, and feelings of intimidation were also mentioned as challenges.

Despite the perceived difficulties in collaboration, it is an essential aspect of schooling and has a significant impact on students. For instance, teachers' perceived relationship with parents is associated with their view of students' emotion regulation and behavior problems (Zulauf-McCurdy and Loomis 2023). A positive relationship between teachers and parents can act as a protective factor for children with externalizing behaviors at school, helping to prevent teachers from resorting to harsh disciplinary measures (Zulauf-McCurdy and Zinsser 2022).

It is important to note that research has highlighted a significant discrepancy between parents' and teachers' views of their relationship with each other (Zulauf-McCurdy and Loomis 2023). There is growing awareness in this field of research regarding the role of the family's ethnic background, especially for marginalized groups, which significantly influences the relationship with teachers. These parents often face structural barriers like racial bias and poverty, which hinder their ability to be involved with the school (Zulauf-McCurdy and Zinsser 2022). Therefore, it is crucial to improve collaboration with parents, particularly those from marginalized groups, and explore effective strategies to achieve this.

Summing up, the current state of research only rarely examines the relationships with parents but the importance of relationships with students is highlighted, impacting their social emotional and academic learning and well-being, but also teachers' well-being and job satisfaction. The teacher-student relationship has been conceived of as asymmetrical, but also as marked by affect contagion, in the form that it transmits emotional states both ways and teachers' emotion and stress regulation are tied to the students' stress and emotion regulation. Hence, research highlights the importance of teachers' capacity to build and maintain responsive, supportive relationships with their students. It is crucial to understand how teachers can be better prepared to actually enact qualities like responsiveness and respect in their interactions with students which are embedded in the complexities and

competing demands of daily work. To this end, it is important to also consider the wider relational contexts such as the overall school climate.

2.1.2. Meso-Level: School Climate

School climate influences teacher stress, job satisfaction, and teaching efficacy (Collie et al. 2015; Hascher and Waber 2021). It is defined as the "affective and cognitive perceptions regarding social interactions, relationships, safety, values, and beliefs held by students, teachers, administrators, and staff within a school" (Rudasill et al. 2018, pg. 47). In correspondence to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model, Rudasill and colleagues posit nested climates within a school's subsystems, like the classroom and the faculty. Particularly, the faculty climate is a factor that is rarely remarked on, deserving of more research due to its impact on educators' job satisfaction and well-being: on the one hand, a positive climate where colleagues feel the support from each other and their leaders and share a sense of collective self-efficacy is a protective factor against burnout (Rothland 2007). On the other hand, negative climate contributes to teachers' occupational stress (Rothland 2005; Rothland 2007). Hence, school climate was found to predict teacher stress, job satisfaction, and teaching efficacy (Collie et al. 2012).

As mentioned in the introduction, a study by Meredith et al. (2020) found that interactions between educators serve as conduits for burnout contagion. Adopting a social network approach collecting data from 931 teachers in 12 schools, the study found that especially frequent and expressive interactions with individuals embedded in the same contexts or subgroups were conducive to propagating stress and burnout. Linking this back to climate, the climate of a school could be regarded as a phenomenon emerging from the interactions, yet distinct from them. Climate is conceived to 'spread out' over multiple actors but, nevertheless, based on specific interactions. To better understand the phenomenon, it has been suggested that the direct, felt experience is an underestimated approach which calls for more qualitative and phenomenological examinations of climate (Boell and Senge 2017).

Among the complex factors shaping school climate, the impact of school leaders has been emphasized (Mahfouz et al. 2019). Through their interactions and example, leaders set the tone for the entire school community. By expressing compassion and providing emotional support, leaders can foster educators' self-efficacy and motivation (Berkovich and Eyal 2015). This aspect was underscored in a qualitative exploration by Böll and Senge (2017). The interviewed scholars and practitioners emphasized that desired relational qualities must be embodied by those in leadership positions. The notion of climate was seen as a manifestation of the underlying school culture and as a "vehicle for its continual renewal." (pg. 9). However, the interviewees pronounced that there is often a gap between sensing the school climate and the perceived ability to actively shape it. This gap, it is contended, can potentially be bridged by cultivating relational competences, a refined awareness of social fields, and positive vision.

In summary, the faculty climate is a crucial factor impacting teacher well-being, and it can be intentionally influenced by school leaders, with downstream effects on the teacher-student

relationship and student outcomes. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the direct, felt experience is an underestimated approach to studying climate, which calls for more qualitative and phenomenological examinations of climate (Boell and Senge 2017).

2.2. Relational Competences

The impact which the quality of educators' relationships with students and their colleagues has on all parties involved suggests the need to foster educators' capacity to shape these relationships in supportive and attuned ways. However, these capacities have for long been conceived as fixed personality traits that cannot be altered, as in traditional early education research and its quest to identify the traits of successful teachers (Dodge 1943) assuming that teaching efficiency is a matter of personality. Over time, it was found that this strand of research was able to identify some traits, but they explained only little of the variance in teaching success (Klassen and Tze 2014). Nevertheless, there is a widespread assumption that teachers' ability to establish good relationships with students is a fixed personality trait. But while personality may be important, this should not disguise the abundant research findings demonstrating that abilities such as empathy, compassion, or perspective-taking are in fact malleable and individuals can indeed deliberately train and improve them, as shown in the field of neuroplasticity (Böckler et al. 2017; Trautwein et al. 2020; Valk et al. 2017). The idea that establishing and maintaining good relationships can be trained is essential for the notion of relational competence(s) presented here. The following sections will examine literature on these competences, including several conceptualizations thereof (3.2.1.), and research findings on interventions aiming to cultivate these competences (3.2.2.). Moreover, the way in which these interventions are delivered and put into practice plays a crucial role for their outcomes and effectiveness (Durlak et al. 2011). Therefore, another section will address findings and concepts concerning implementation (3.2.3.).

2.2.1. Concept

Current conceptualizations of relational and social emotional competences (Aspelin and Jonsson 2019; Jensen et al. 2015; Juul and Jensen 2017; Zins et al. 2004) emphasize attunement, empathy, and perspective-taking, along with a prosocial attitude or motivation. They differ in some respects, such as their theoretical underpinnings, and concerning intra-personal abilities and particularly mindfulness. Further research needs to shed light on how these abilities can be cultivated and enacted within contextually embedded interactions (Aspelin 2017a).

This section will present various conceptualizations of relational competences articulated since Thorndike first introduced the notion of social competence in 1920. The most commonly used concept within educational research it that of 'social and emotional learning' (SEL). SEL has been extensively promoted and studied particularly in the USA and Canada, mainly on the level of students, with a growing emphasis on teacher SEL (Jennings and Greenberg 2009). In contrast, the concept of relational competence is primarily used in

Scandinavian research and has been applied to educators (Nordenbo et al. 2008). Table 1 provides an overview of concept definitions including various sub-competencies.

Table 1: Conceptualizations of relational competences

Authors	(Sub-)Competence	Definition
Elias et al. (1997)	Social and emotional competence	"The ability to understand, manage, and express the social and emotional aspects of one's life in ways that enable the successful management of life tasks such as learning, forming relationships, solving everyday problems, and adapting to the complex demands of growth and development. It includes self-awareness, control of impulsivity, working cooperatively, and caring about oneself and others." (Elias et al. 1997, pg. 2)
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (Zins et al. 2007) ("CASEL")	Self-awareness	"Identifying and recognizing emotions; Accurate self-perception; Recognizing strengths, needs, and values; Self-efficacy; Spirituality" (Zins et al. 2007, pg. 195)
	Social awareness	"Perspective taking; Empathy; Appreciating diversity; Respect for others" (ibid. pg. 195)
	Responsible Decision Making	"Problem identification and situation analysis; Problem solving; Evaluation and reflection; Personal, moral, and ethical responsibility" (ibid. pg. 195)
	Self-Management	"Impulse control and stress management; Self-motivation and discipline; Goal setting and organizational skills" (ibid. pg. 195)
	Relationship Management	"Communication, social engagement, and building relationships; Working cooperatively, Negotiation, refusal, and conflict management; Help seeking and providing" (ibid. pg. 195)
Juul & Jensen (2017) ("J&J")	Relational competence	"The professional's ability to 'see' the individual child on its own terms and attune her behavior accordingly without giving up leadership, as well as the ability to be authentic in her contact with the child. And as the professional's ability and desire to take full responsibility for the quality of the relation." (Juul and Jensen 2017, pg. 2)
Jensen, Skibsted, & Christensen (2015) ("JS&C")	Relational competence	"being able to meet students and parents with openness and respect, to show empathy and to be able to take responsibility for one's own part of the relationship as an educator." (Jensen et al. 2015, pg. 6)
	Appreciation	"Meeting another person with an open and genuine interest in that person's perspectives, experience,

		thoughts and feelings." (ibid. pg. 7)
	Change of perspective	"The teacher has additional responsibility for the relationship and must therefore seek to decode how her own contribution is experienced from the students' perspective and continuously match her actions accordingly." (ibid. pg. 8)
	Empathy	"The ability to identify with, recognize and understand others' feelings […] without taking over the other's feelings" (ibid. pg. 9)
	Attention and presence of mind	"the competence to be present both in relation to the person you are with and in relation to yourself." (ibid. pg. 9)
Aspelin and Jonsson (2019) ("A&J")	Communicative competence	"the capability of teachers to communicate both verbally and non-verbally in order to achieve a high degree of cognitive and emotional attunement in relation to students. In this regard, the actions of teachers who possess relational competence encourage mutual understanding and respect in their encounters with students." (Aspelin and Jonsson 2019, pg. 269)
	Differentiation competence	"The capability of teachers to regulate the degree of closeness and distance in relation to the students. Teachers possessing relational competence act so that the distance separating teachers and students becomes neither too large nor too small. Space is created to allow both students and teachers to discern themselves as individuals, without jeopardizing social bonds." (ibid. pg. 269)
	Socio-emotional competence	"The capability of the teacher to cope with emotional indicators concerning the status of social bonds in interpersonal communication. The actions of teachers possessing relational competence evoke and encourage feelings of pride, while acknowledging and channeling feelings of shame in a direction that is productive from the standpoint of educational goals." (ibid. pg. 270)

The conceptualizations presented here reveal both significant commonalities and differences that will be outlined in the following sections.

Attunement

Across all listed conceptualizations, including CASEL, A&J, J&J, JS&C, attunement, empathy, and perspective-taking are consistently highlighted, along with a prosocial attitude. These concepts range from 'social awareness', to achieving a 'high degree of attunement'. Thus, there is a consensus that empathic attunement is a core component of relational competence. Some authors take this understanding further, highlighting that relationally competent behavior requires from educators to be aware of how their actions are affecting a student, how they are being received by the child from the child's viewpoint (JS&C), and how they affect the relationship or 'social bond' to the child (A&J). These authors thus view relational competence more consequentially as contextualized in an interaction process. Their view aligns with Siegel (2020) who suggested that attunement involves the two processes of 'tracking' and 'aligning': Tracking refers to being present with and aware of another person

> "changing states from moment to moment in an open and receptive way. […] Alignment is one component of affect attunement, in which the state of one individual is altered to approximate that of the other member of the dyad." (Siegel 2020, pg. 386).

An adult's tracking and aligning with a child's state supports the child to feel being attuned to by the parent ("feeling felt," Siegel 2020, pg. 387). Importantly, attunement does not mean continual tracking and aligning, as this would result in engulfment.

Furthermore, attunement must be distinguished from feelings of empathic distress with emotionally burdened students (Wink et al. 2021). Empathic distress occurs when teachers feel the pain of their students too acutely. It was found that teachers' propensity for empathic distress is associated with relational conflicts with their students and higher job burnout (Wink et al. 2021). Therefore, JS&C propose that teachers should possess empathy as an ability to understand others' feelings without taking them on. This requires the capacity to differentiate one's own experiences from that of another, which will be explored subsequently.

Differentiation

Another difference concerns the concept of differentiation which was first introduced in the field of systemic family therapy (Bowen 1976). A&J's define relational competence based on a theory of interpersonal relationships (Scheff 1990) that also builds on Bowen's ideas positing a fundamental dilemma between distance and closeness in interpersonal relationships, involving the risk of being engulfed by or merged with the other (under-differentiation) or becoming excessively distant and isolated (over-differentiation). Similarly, Juul and Jensen (2017) highlight the existential conflict between the individual's 'integrity' and 'cooperation' with others. Optimal differentiation involves being close enough to experience the other's perspective while maintaining enough distance or boundaries to regard oneself as a unique individual. A&J therefore argue that teachers need 'differentiation capacity.' Correspondingly, the term 'related individuation' (Stierlin 1989) has been used to denote an experiential

process in which a person integrates the two basic human needs for autonomy and relatedness without excluding one or the other but learning to express and fulfill them both. For example, a person showing related individuation is able to empathically attune to another and feel connected while also maintaining autonomous goals and viewpoints that are different from another.

Responsibility

Unlike A&J and Juul and Jensen emphasize that educators' relational competence involves the professional´s ability and willingness to take full responsibility for the quality of the relation (Juul and Jensen 2017). This heightened responsibility results from the asymmetrical nature of the teacher-student relationship with students depending more strongly on it but having little possibilities and power to improve it (Juul and Jensen 2017). Crucially, this raises the question of what this responsibility for the relationship entails practically.

Like A&J, J&J highlight that relational competence means caring not only for the student's outcome and needs but for the relationship itself. This stance affords extending the focus from student achievement, and even from student well-being, towards the gap between student and educator. It introduces the relationship (J&J) or social bond (A&J) as an entity and a domain of responsibility in its own right.

Introducing the notion of social bonds outlined by Scheff's theory sheds fresh light on this question. One aspect of this responsibility is becoming aware of the quality of the social bond to another. Even though the bonds may appear stable over time, they are, in fact, dynamic and unpredictable phenomena which can be threatened, cut off, or repaired, exhibiting a status of relative fragility or stability at any moment. Becoming aware of the quality of a bond requires a process of 'assessment' – on an affective, embodied, or cognitive level – based on assumptions about what makes for a high-quality bond. It is worth mentioning that there are different perspectives on this subject. For example, Scheff's theory suggests that an indicator of strong bonds is that they evoke feelings of pride in students. By contrast, attachment theory suggests that children feel a sense of safety and connectedness, which enables them to engage in exploration behavior, and indicating healthy and secure attachment. While pride may be too narrow an indicator (unless defining pride very broadly), Jensen and Goetzsche (2020) posit the existential need of being valued in human contact, which may be an alternative defined as "being acknowledged with all the different emotions, bodily sensations and thoughts that every human being possesses" (ibid. pg. 88).

The more general point to be made here is that the various approaches posit indicators, albeit partly different ones, for high-quality bonds. The presence or absence of children's signaling feeling safe, exploring, feeling acknowledgement and pride can then indicate the status of the bond. Responsibility entails not only awareness of these indicators, but it affords a response. This response is guided towards improving, repairing, or maintaining the quality of the bond. For example, noticing that a child does not dare to speak up in the classroom, a teacher would provide attunement and support for the child and demonstrate attitudes and actions

that likely improve the quality of the bond. Both J&J and A&J align with attachment research in highlighting the importance of attunement and a friendly, positive, or compassionate attitude as fundamental for relationship quality.

These conceptual considerations should not disguise the complexity and unpredictability of the relational processes in schools (Luhmann and Schorr 1982). Even well intended and skillful actions on the side of the teacher can fail in producing the desired result in the child. For example, a child's anxiety may not be readily malleable through the teacher's attunement and may not lead to exploration behavior. Therefore, SC&J emphasize that teachers need to decode continuously how their actions are experienced from the viewpoint of the student and adapt their actions accordingly.

Importantly, the idea of this responsibility could easily be interpreted as a burden for educators, demanding quasi-therapeutic skills to fulfill parenting roles for each student This emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between responsibility for the students' lives (held by parents), and for the quality of the teacher-student relationship (held by teachers). For example, while an educator cannot liberate a student from a burdening family situation, it is nevertheless possible to meet the child with compassion and interest and potentially, over time, develop a strong bond that can serve as a protective factor for the child.

Intrapersonal Abilities

There is debate over the role of intra-personal abilities with respect to relational competence. While the definitions by CASEL and JS&C include intrapersonal abilities like self-awareness and -management, none of these are mentioned by A&J. For example, CASEL highlight the importance of teachers' the ability to "recognize their emotions, emotional patterns, and tendencies" as well as to "know how to generate and use emotions such as joy and enthusiasm to motivate learning in themselves and others" (Jennings & Greenberg 2009, pg. 493). They also emphasize self-management, i.e., educators' ability to "manage their behavior even when emotionally aroused by challenging situations" and to "regulate their emotions in healthy ways that facilitate positive classroom outcomes without compromising their health" (Jennings and Greenberg 2009, pg. 493).

In recent years, mindfulness has been increasingly regarded as a compatible and supportive approach that fosters SEL and relational competence (Valtl 2021), evidenced by mindfulness-based SEL programs like CARE for teachers (Jennings et al. 2017). Mindfulness has been defined in a variety of ways (Ergas 2017; Kabat-Zinn 2015; Williams and Kabat-Zinn 2013), but the core facets generally involve two intertwined components: attention and attitude. It involves a present-moment awareness of the phenomena of experience (Shapiro et al. 2006) with an attitude of acceptance rather than agitation or rejection of these phenomena. The attitude of mindfulness cannot be clearly distinguished from the notion of self-compassion (Neff 2003) which involves self-kindness as opposed to self-judgment. Mindful, present-moment attention and a self-compassionate and accepting attitude towards life experiences foster stress- and emotion regulation (Guendelman et al. 2017) as well as cognitive,

emotional, and behavioral flexibility (Jennings et al. 2017; Shapiro et al. 2006). Therefore, it has been suggested that they foundational for social and emotional learning and relational competence (Feuerborn and Gueldner 2019; Valtl 2021).

However, in the Scandinavian discourse, approaches emphasizing mindfulness as a steppingstone for relational competence were criticized, arguing that they improve self-understanding rather than the relationship to students (Gottlieb and Matthiesen 2016). Despite an empirical rebuttal of this critique (Nielsen and Laursen 2020), the more recent conceptualizations (such as A&J) avoided allusions to intra-personal abilities. Hence, the specific roles of intra-personal abilities like mindfulness, self-compassion in the promotion of positive relationships deserve further investigation.

2.2.2. Cultivation

Considering the body of knowledge concerning the impact of relationship quality at school on student and teacher well-being, health, and learning outcomes, the relational competence of teachers is of paramount importance. Surprisingly, there is a lack of research on interventions fostering educators' relational competences. While initially, SEL programs targeted primarily the students, they focus increasingly on teachers' social emotional competencies. Various interventions targeting teachers have been devised, including skills and practices fostering teacher-student relationships (Driscoll and Pianta 2010) and classroom climate (Quinlan et al. 2015) to school (Quinn et al. 2021) and even system wide (Senge et al. 2019) implementation strategies. While these interventions share the aim of enhancing educators' social-emotional competences, they vary significantly in terms of methodologies, contents, dosages, and their goals for the teacher-student relationships. Initial findings from qualitative and quantitative studies suggest that teacher-oriented interventions indeed increase their relational competences (Hwang et al. 2017; Oliveira et al. 2021a), adaptive and accepting emotion-regulation (Frank et al. 2015; Jennings et al. 2013; Sharp and Jennings 2016; Jennings et al. 2017), and diminish the risk of burnout (Oliveira et al. 2021b). This section will present these findings.

Quantitative Research

The available evidence from various studies, including meta-analyses and reviews, suggests that targeted interventions can have a significant positive impact on educators' relational competence and mindfulness (Hwang et al. 2017; Oliveira et al. 2021a).

Oliveira and colleagues (2021a) conducted meta-analyses on interventions aimed at developing educators' social and emotional learning. They included 27 studies from 2008 to 2020, focusing on 39 interventions and 3,004 teachers from North America, Europe, and Asia. The results showed that these interventions led to significant improvements in educators' social and emotional competence and well-being, with effect sizes ranging from small to medium.

Another study by Oliveira et al. (2021a) examined SEL interventions for teachers, which also addressed intrapersonal competencies like self-awareness and self-management. These interventions were found to improve teachers' reported personal accomplishment and reduce emotional distress, with medium effect sizes.

Similarly, a review by Hwang et al. (2017) documented positive effects of mindfulness training on teacher's self-reported well-being, mindfulness, and self-compassion, next to reductions in physiological symptoms, psychological distress, and burnout. Latter reductions in teacher burnout were recently replicated in a British RCT study assessing 394 teachers from 83 schools (Kuyken et al. 2022).

The effectiveness of the Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE for Teachers) program has been examined in various studies. Combining mindfulness and relational aspects to promote the social and emotional competence of teachers during 30-hour professional development, CARE bares similarities with the EMS program. A randomized controlled trial (Jennings et al. 2017) involving 224 teachers found that those who participated in the CARE program showed improvements in adaptive emotion regulation, mindfulness, and reduced psychological distress compared to the control group. Similar positive outcomes regarding mindfulness and emotion regulation were found in other studies (Frank et al. 2015; Jennings et al. 2017; Jennings et al. 2013; Sharp and Jennings 2016), including a German pilot study on mindfulness-based teacher training (Kraft et al. 2022) with 36 teachers, which showed reduced stress experience and burnout risk, along with increased well-being and mindfulness.

While the evidence supports the positive impact of targeted interventions on educators, especially regarding their self-reported social emotional competences and well-being, the results concerning classroom climate were more ambiguous. A meta-analysis highlighted the heterogeneity in the existing research and the need for more investigation into the impact of cultivating teacher relational competence on teacher-student relationships, classroom climate, and student outcomes (Oliveira et al. 2021a). However, findings from systematic observations of classroom climate (Jennings et al. 2017) and self-perceptions of school climate (Kuyken et al. 2022) suggest potential positive effects of these interventions in improving the classroom environment.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research on interventions promoting mindfulness and social-emotional learning for educators has yielded valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of participants. These studies highlight several positive outcomes reported by educators who underwent these interventions. A core theme across studies is that educators spoke of experiencing better emotional regulation and reduced stress levels after participating in mindfulness and SEL interventions. In particular, these practices helped them disrupt automatic reaction tendencies and respond more intentionally to challenging situations

(Emerson et al. 2017; Hwang et al. 2017; Mackenzie et al. 2020; Morales 2018; Schussler et al. 2016).

Morales (2018) explored the effect of mindfulness on educators' lived experiences reporting an improved 'capacity to respond', i.e., to de-center from automatic reactions and act with more awareness and intentionality. Similarly, interviews a subgroup of teachers participating in the CARE program (Schussler et al. 2016) suggested that mindfulness practice increased teacher's ability not to 'take things personally' but instead meet negative emotions with non-reactivity, improving emotion regulation and resilience.

Moreover, teachers reported the intentional use of mindfulness strategies (Hwang et al. 2017), such as body scan or taking deep breaths, before they responded to a situational challenge which allowed them to de-center (Fresco et al. 2007). Morales (2019) further reported that common components of such a mindful response were pausing, distancing, reappraisal, and choice. The aspect of 'pausing' has also been highlighted by Mackenzie, Fegly, and Stutesman (2020) who studied the effects of a mindfulness training using focus groups and individual interviews with a total of 68 educators. The authors highlighted that a key finding was educators' shift in experiencing and acting in relation to time and particularly, taking their time, stopping, slowing down were seen as crucial to reduce emotional reactivity and create a more pro-social classroom climate. In pausing, changing their inner relationship to their felt experience, teachers were able to act with less reactivity. They also reported improved relationships with students. Similarly, a German qualitative study by Altner (2018) mentioned improved faculty climate along with a 'culture of self-care'.

It is important to note that while there is a growing body of qualitative research on mindfulness and SEL interventions for educators, the number of studies in this area is still relatively limited compared to quantitative research. Nevertheless, both qualitative and quantitative studies support the notion that targeted interventions can enhance educators' relational competences, reduce the risk of burnout, and promote adaptive and accepting self-regulation while fostering stronger connections with students.

Precursor of the EMS Project

The longitudinal qualitative study on the 'rela' project, a precursor of the EMS project, provides valuable insights into the impact of mindfulness and relational competence interventions on pre-service teachers and their subsequent teaching practices (Laursen and Nielsen 2016; Nielsen and Laursen 2020). Incepted by the Danish school psychologist who later developed EMS, the 'rela' project was carried out from 2012–2016 with a cohort of 50 Danish pre-service teachers using mindfulness practices, theoretical discussions, dialogue practices, supervision, and exercises in body awareness. After two years of training, interviews were conducted with twelve 'rela' participants and with a control group of ten pre-service teachers from the same university. Participants reported using mindfulness practices in challenging situations during practicum, which helped them regulate their feelings and restore focused attention in the classroom. They also spoke of having a reflexive approach to

their professional role, which involved the ability to step out of the teacher's role when needed. In contrast, the control group emphasized tailoring their professional role according to their personality (Laursen and Nielsen 2016).

Moreover, the analysis revealed contrasting assumptions regarding the responsibility for the quality of teacher-student relationships between the control and experimental group. When articulating their experiences of positive relationship-building with students, 9 of the 10 student teachers from the control group highlighted the importance of an open and friendly attitude towards students. This approach was termed 'fortuitous relationship-building' because it relied on the students' positive responsiveness to the teacher's attitude. In other words, the control group seemed to believe that the quality of the teacher-student relationship was largely dependent on the students' reactions and behaviors.

On the other hand, in the project group, the majority of student teachers (10 out of 12) mentioned actively applying themselves to improve unsatisfying relationships with students who were perceived as distant or rejecting. This proactive approach was termed 'intentional relationship-building'. The student teachers in the project group acknowledged that building positive relationships in challenging situations required effort and intentional regulation of their own emotions, which sometimes included experiences of high arousal and nervousness. They were motivated to take on this challenging task by drawing on the psychological theories they had been introduced to during the 'rela' project.

The follow-up interviews with participants from the 'rela' project (N = 9), conducted after about a year of teaching practice, revealed that the newly trained teachers continued to apply the practices and attitudes they learned during the intervention in their interactions with students, parents, and colleagues. They reported using these learned skills to support students in challenging situations and to navigate difficult interactions with parents and colleagues.

These findings align with results from the CARE project, where participants also used brief mindfulness practices to regulate their arousal and affect and continued to do so after the training. The teachers in the 'rela' project emphasized that they embodied and enacted these learnings in their daily interactions, suggesting that the training had a lasting impact on their relational competence.

Analyzing reports from the 'rela' project, Aspelin and Jonsson (2019) conclude that while pre-service teachers were generally ill-prepared for the relational challenges they encountered during their practicum, a systemic training can support the development of relational competence.

There were some critical responses to the 'rela' project. Matthiesen (2016) argued that the project might orient teachers too much toward a 'reflective domain', with an emphasis on self-reflection at the expense of interpersonal communication. Despite the later findings by Nielsen and Laursen (2020) showing that 'rela' participants effectively used the program practices to improve their communication with students, and similar results from

international research on mindfulness, the initial critique by Matthiesen (2016) continued to influence the Scandinavian discourse on relational competence. This influence led to a shift in focus away from intra-personal aspects in favor of emphasizing interpersonal communication (Aspelin 2020; Aspelin and Jonsson 2019).

In conclusion, the longitudinal qualitative study on the 'rela' project, a precursor of the EMS project, highlights the positive impact on pre-service teachers' abilities to regulate their emotions, and their ability and intention to proactively shape their relationships with students. To further understand the potential transferability of the 'rela' project to in-service educators and the German context, further research is needed. Additionally, exploring similar interventions in different contexts will be essential for broader application and understanding, not at least of the debated role of intra-personal aspects in promoting relational competence.

2.2.3. Implementation

Research shows that the outcomes of any kind of training program depend on the quality of its implementation, i.e., how the program is put into practice (Durlak et al. 2011). Hence, to promote educators' relational competences, it is important to understand how the implementation of targeted interventions shapes outcomes. The definition provided by Meyers and colleagues represents a wide-spread conceptual understanding of implementation:

> "To put an innovation into practice in such a way that it meets the necessary standards to achieve the innovation's desired outcomes" (Meyers et al. 2012, pg. 465)

The definition emphasizes meeting predefined standards and outcomes. However, scholars and practitioners have pointed out that this standardized outcome-logic is based on the false assumption that the desired changes can be achieved in linear ways (Kurtz and Snowden 2003; Scharmer and Kaufer 2013). Complexity scholars argue that expert-driven linear designs tend to fail because they are inconsistent with complex adaptive systems. Schools, for that matter, and human interactions in general, often exhibit the properties of complex adaptive systems, rather than linear systems (Keshavarz et al. 2010).

Therefore, studying implementation processes affords a close examination of their complexity including the various subsystems involved in it – as outlined for instance in Bronfenbrenner's (2000) eco-systemic model. The relevant nested systems involve on the micro-level factors such as the motivation of adopters, embedded in an organizational meso-system marked by allocated time and resources, which are embedded within societal and political macro-systems, such as alignment with policy and guidance (Moir 2018). The notion of nested systems naturally highlights the importance of collaboration and alignment across these systems for implementation success. For example, Mahfouz et al. (2019) pointed out that promoting student social emotional learning hinges on prosocial classrooms which hinge on prosocial schools which hinge on prosocial school boards, etc.

On the micro-level, teachers have to put training programs into practice. This has been an important focus in teacher professional development. For example, Clarke (2002) proposed an 'interconnected model' positing that teacher growth involves several feedback- and feedforward-cycles between an external domain, such as a training input, the personal domain of the teacher, the domain of experimentation, and the domain of consequence, i.e. salient outcomes. The model highlights that any change impulse in the external domain, e.g., in the form of a SEL program, will require experimentation and adaptation in the concrete environment at the school and the salient outcomes of this experimentation will be reflected upon and feed back to the personal domain. Hence, change may be initiated in the external domain, but the whole change process is conceived of as a complex translation, rather than a 'copy-and-paste' process (Korthagen 2017). The significance of teachers' personal domain has also been underscored in empirical studies on SEL and mindfulness programs in which teachers are supposed to carry out the training with students. The effectiveness of such programs depend on teachers' social emotional competences and mindfulness skills (Weare 2019). The example of a recent randomized control trial study (Kuyken et al. 2022) illustrates this point. The study carried out mindfulness-based interventions in 43 schools with 4232 students across Great Britain. Contrary to previous research, the study found no improvements in student mental health. It has been argued that poor teacher capacity may have contributed to this lack of findings (Weare 2023). In fact, the authors of the study reported that 'only a small minority were able to teach it really well', which may correspond to why students responded with low levels of engagement and motivation. This point has also been highlighted by the practitioners and scholars interviewed by Boell and Senge (2017), emphasizing that the adults in a school must embody the relational qualities they would like to see in the school. In particular, those in visible leadership positions need to genuinely enact these desired qualities like compassion and respect.

Hence, it is crucial to focus on the factors that widen and close the gap between teachers' actual behavior and the values or theories they espouse (Argyris 1976). Here, the impact of habitual and automatic assumptions, so called 'mental models', has been highlighted (Schein 2010; Senge 2006). Korthagen (2017) illustrates this by the example of a student teacher who has a cognitive understanding of concepts such as 'care' and 'trust' and knows about their significance for the relationship with students in the classroom but who may still fail in enacting these qualities because of an implicit view of the classroom as 'a dangerous place to be'. Implementation success may be thwarted by 'mental models' that counteract the program goals. Accordingly, empirical findings suggest that factors such as a school's ethos and climate determine the implementation success of whole-school SEL programs (Banerjee et al. 2014).

Generally, there is little research on implementation of SEL trainings for educators. A recent meta-analysis (Oliveira et al. 2021a) emphasized that variations in program characteristics were not predictive of implementation success. The reported variations comprised a) program specificity, ranging from universal interventions geared towards all teachers of all grades to programs tailored for specific groups of teachers, b) the inclusion of mindfulness training, and c) dosage, ranging from brief workshops to longitudinal programs.

As mentioned above, defining desired outcomes of an intervention is crucial, yet it may require considering and critically reflecting on its context. For example, Ergas (2019) illustrates the diversity of desired outcomes distinguishing mindfulness *in, as,* and *of* education. Most conventional studies use mindfulness *in* education to enhance educational performance and health outcomes such as burnout. However, this approach has been criticized for normalizing the structural causes of phenomena like burnout instead of transforming them. Specifically, the approach may shift the burden to the individuals by 'responsibilizing' the individual who is expected to cultivate mindfulness to better cope with systemic stressors (Reveley 2015). Secondly, mindfulness *as* education intends a more radical integration of the practice and attitudes of mindfulness as legitimate pedagogical goals and methods for their own sake without them necessarily serving any other pedagogical or health outcome. Thirdly, mindfulness *of* education involves a critical 'contemplative inquiry' (Zajonc 2016) into the processes of education including their underlying cultural norms and imperatives (Magee 2016).

Summing up, little is to be expected of a powerful intervention put poorly into practice. Intervention success requies a high quality implementation which is contingent upon context factors such as the stakeholders' needs along with the structures and conditions they are embedded in. Therefore, there is a need for more research regarding the implementation of whole-school mindfulness-based SEL programs, particularly for teachers. Given the complexity, such research should closely follow the implementation process and the interplay between the characteristics of the various systems and actors, while also critically reflecting on the purpose of the intervention in light of possible systemic issues.

2.3. Summary

The previous chapter has presented literature on the teacher-student relationship (Chapter 2.1.1.) showing *why* this is a meaningful subject: Both sides of this asymmetric relationship are emotionally involved and affected by it, both in desirable ways, e.g., supporting learning and well-being, and undesirable ways, e.g., perpetuating stress and burnout. Similarly, research findings on faculty and school climate (Chapter 2.1.2.) showed that also the relationships among faculty affect teachers' well-being, and may furthermore influence the teacher-student relationship. Moreover, the definitions of teacher's relational or social emotional competences have been analyzed (Chapter 2.2.1.), illuminating conceptualizations of *how* educators' attitudes and behaviors can improve relationships. This revealed, among other things, that definitions converged in highlighting teachers' attunement with students, but diverged regarding the role of intra-personal personal competences, such as emotion regulation. Moreover, there is growing evidence that programs targeting educators' relational competencies may successfully improve well-being and (self-reported) attunement with students and diminish their burnout (Chapter 2.2.2.). To effectively improve the relationships at school, the quality of program implementation within the complex interplay between characteristics of the program, its providers, and the school is crucial (Chapter 2.2.3.).

Moreover, the previous chapters have revealed some important gaps in the literature which this thesis attempts to address.

1. Theoretical Grounding: There is a need for a consistent theoretical framework that aligns with empirical findings, recognizing the impactful nature of relationships in both positive and negative ways.
2. Empirical Grounding: More research is required on interactions between teachers and students, moving beyond questionnaire-data to capture the granularity of interactions. Interviews with teachers about specific interactions could be a useful approach.
3. Application: Further research is needed to identify factors that facilitate or hinder the implementation of whole-school approaches focusing on educators' relational competences.

Considering these gaps, the thesis aims to develop and apply a conceptualization of 'social fields' as a framework for studying relational processes at school and beyond. This framework will be presented in the following chapter.

3. Social Fields

The theoretical framework proposed here intends to shed light on the phenomenology of how actors experience and enact their relationships with themselves, each other, and the larger context. The focus is on the 'in-between', "the gap between teacher and learner" (Biesta 2004, pg. 13) in which education takes place and which will be conceptualized here as a 'social field'. This framework posits that we live our lives embedded in social fields and, consciously or unconsciously, something about the nature of the social field is known to us (Pomeroy and Herrmann 2023). Walking into a classroom, an office or a social gathering, a person notices the atmosphere of that social space, even if one isn't consciously aware of it, and this atmosphere affects the person. Wolf (2019) aptly describes affective atmospheres as infusing "a predimensional space occupied by a person capable of feeling them. They are pervasive impressions creating an affective involvement that the person involved can hardly escape" (ibid. pg. 53). Similarly, the interviewed educators and researchers in Boell & Senge's (2017) highlighted that the social field of a school can be felt and sensed in an immediate way, becoming aware of what it is like to be in a school. However, there is a ubiquitous quality to social fields, and because of their ubiquity, their texture often goes unnoticed, just as a fish swimming in water doesn't notice its wetness (Pomeroy and Herrmann 2023). Similarly, in interaction with another person, one readily notices the actions of the other, but the in-between linking own actions to those of the other often goes unnoticed. Prone to a 'fundamental attribution error' (Jones and Harris 1967), the other person is the salient feature for the actor's attention, disregarding the context, atmosphere, and own actions. Hence, the goal here is to articulate the properties of this ubiquitous and at the same time elusive phenomenon so that some rigor can be applied to its investigation.

The term 'social field', used here to focus on this habitual 'blind spot' (Scharmer 2009), has its own history in sociology, psychology and the associated field of organizational development (Bourdieu 1998; Friedman et al. 2020; Lewin 1939). Contemporary use of the term draws particularly on Lewin's conceptualization of the social field as a domain of psychological forces motivating individual and collective behavior (Lewin 1951) and on Bourdieu's conceptualization of the social field as "a force field as well as a field of struggles" (Bourdieu 1990, pg. 143). Both Lewin and Bourdieu used the term to explain social phenomena by shifting the emphasis from individual motivation and behavior that is separate from context to a contextualized parts-within-the whole perspective. As Bourdieu put it, "to think in terms of field is to think relationally" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, pg. 96). Here, the whole in all its complexity is seen as a key agent shaping experience. Similarly, Lewin also argued that any type of behavior depends upon the total field (Lewin 1943). Further, he introduced the idea that knowing a social field depends on direct involvement with it, a practice comprising an intentional effort to effect change within the field, giving rise to the discipline of action research (Lewin 1946).

A commonality of these earlier conceptualizations of the social field is what Martin (Martin 2003) termed a "faith in underlying connections" (pg. 28). They conceive of the social field more as an explanatory framework and a theoretical proposition, one that in itself cannot be seen or measured, but must be assumed based on its effects. Here, the novel conceptualization developed for this study differs in that it considers the social field to be indeed knowable (Pomeroy and Herrmann 2023).

This conceptualization draws significantly from the work of pioneers in the fields of awareness-based action research, systems thinking, and interpersonal (neuro-)biology (Boell and Senge 2017; Scharmer 2009; Scharmer and Kaufer 2013; Scharmer 2021; Senge et al. 2004; Siegel 2020). Here, Scharmer (2018) describes it as "the quality of relationships that give rise to patterns of thinking, conversing, and organizing, which in turn produce practical results" (pg. 14). Importantly, the social field here is seen as the source of these patterns of interaction. Scharmer and colleagues (2021) further state:

> "Social fields are social systems, but seen from within. When we shift our perspective on a system from an outside view to seeing it from within—when we begin to inquire from first- and second-person views —we switch our perspective from the social system to the social field." (ibid. pg. 3).

The authors highlight that the social field as a phenomenon depends on a taking the 'interiority' of social systems into perspective. Here, this more recent conceptualization of the social field goes beyond Bourdieu and Lewin, maintaining that social fields are entities that can be known. Therefore, the new understanding of social fields draws from phenomenology which contributes a rich and multifaceted understanding of the lived experience of social spaces.

3.1. Basic Properties

Building on phenomenology, the basic and interrelated properties of social fields can be outlined: intercorporeality, affordance, and autonomy (Pomeroy and Herrmann 2023).

3.1.1. Intercorporeality

The novel phenomenological concept of social fields views them as founded in intercorporeality (Pomeroy and Herrmann 2023). The term was coined by French phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty (1964) describing the intertwinement of one's own body and that of another in terms of a dynamic, circular reciprocity of expressions and impressions:

> "In perceiving the other, my body and his [*sic*] are coupled, resulting in a sort of action which pairs them. This conduct which I am able only to see, I live somehow from a distance. I make it mine; I recover it or comprehend it. Reciprocally I know that the gestures I make myself can be the objects of another's intention." (Merleau-Ponty 1964, pg. 118)

Inter-bodily resonance does not even require conscious awareness but occurs largely without being noticed or reflected upon. Rather, it forms a primary, pre-reflective base for intersubjectivity, communication, and social understanding (Fuchs 2016a). Fuchs argues that participants of such an inter-bodily and inter-affective system experience a specific feeling of being bodily connected, one that he terms 'mutual incorporation.' The felt sense of one's 'lived body' (in German ‚Leib') reaches out and is extended by the other. For instance, in an interaction between a teacher and a student during an oral exam, the teacher's friendly and caring tone of voice, soft movements, and an interested and encouraging gaze may evoke in the student a bodily resonance of relaxation of some anxiety, and an impulse to 'show up' and speak along with a focused, open, and warm atmosphere. By contrast, the teacher's critical gaze and sharp voice may evoke a in the student the bodily resonance of shrinking or shakiness, a tightness in the throat, and an impulse to withdraw, accompanied by feeling of shame and nervousness and a tense, contracted atmosphere. Thus, the expressions can trigger corresponding or complementary bodily resonance.

Importantly, intercorporeality highlights the circularity or reciprocity (depicted in Figure 1), so that the way B is impacted by A – the intra-bodily resonance in form of tensions and feelings – is at once expressed in slight or expressive bodily shifts and thus immediately become an impression for A. For instance, the student's shrinking bodily expressions and shaky, stuttering voice may evoke in the teacher further anger, exemplifying a somewhat vicious intercorporeal cycle. It is not enough to think of one isolated expression leading to another isolated impression. Rather, what results from this is a continuous, reciprocal intertwinement of expressions and impressions which is not driven by any of the actors alone but by the dynamic inter-affective system as a whole. As Fuchs (2016b) elucidates, this system is driven by two distinct yet inextricably linked aspects of bodily resonance – the affective, felt sense of the 'lived body' (German 'Leib'), and the emotive expression of the *'living body'* (German, 'Körper'):

"it is the peculiar 'chiasmatic' structure of the body as the turning point of interior and exterior, as both Leib and Körper, which enables the interlacement of self and other in the process of mutual affection and perception." (Fuchs 2016b, pg. 200)
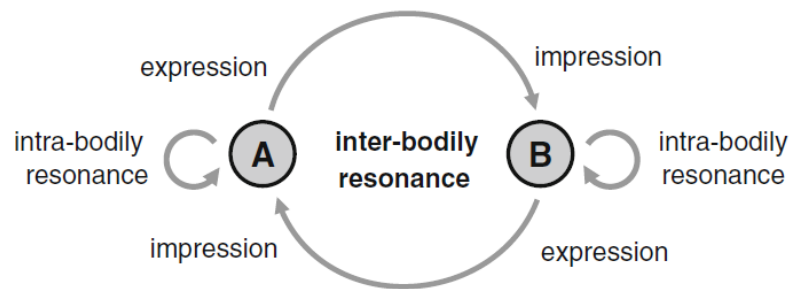
Figure 1: An illustration of the extended body (taken from Froese & Fuchs 2012)

It is important to note that such resonances do not only occur in dyads, but also in larger groups (Bache 2008). This has for instance been described by anthropologist Edward T. Hall who studied children on a playground. Filmed from a nearby hidden location, it seemed as though each child in the playground was doing his or her own separate thing—running, jumping, laughing, and swinging—but thorough analysis revealed that the group was pulsing to a unified rhythm. "Without knowing it," Hall (1976) wrote, "they were all moving to a beat they generated themselves ... an unconscious undercurrent of synchronized movement tied the group together" (pg. 72 – 77).

Attachment researcher and psychiatrist Daniel Stern articulates the implications of intercorporeal intertwinement for the concept of the individual mind:

> "We do not any longer see our minds as independent, separate, and isolated ... we live surrounded by other people's intentions, feelings, and thoughts which interact with our own ... our intentions are modified or come into existence in a dialogue with the experience of other people's intentions ... Our mental life is, so to speak, created in community. It is this permanent, mutual, creative dialogue with the minds of other people, which I call the intersubjective matrix." (Stern 2004, pg. 77-78)

Stern elucidates that rather than residing within an individual, affective, and mental states are in a constant interaction within what in this thesis is called a social field – one might metaphorically say, they 'travel' through the field. Accordingly, Foulkes (1975) who was a pioneer in group psychoanalysis contends that "what we traditionally look upon as our innermost self, the intrapsychic against the external world, is thus not only shareable, but is in fact already shared" (ibid. pg. 62). Foulkes' statement expresses a revolutionary turn in thinking: the innermost, the most private, is already shared, based on common ground, and derived from inter-subjectivity.

While intercorporeality couples the actors' affective and bodily resonance, it is noteworthy that this intertwinement extends beyond the lived experience to parameters observable from

a 'third person' perspective and 'objective' measurements. Across multiple disciplines and methodologies studying how people interact, spontaneous synchronizations were found in peoples' behavioral, affective, physiological, and neural responses (Semin and Cacioppo 2008; Wheatley et al. 2012). Hence, synchronizations are not unlikely events but commonly operate throughout many physical and living systems, as Koole and Tschacher (2016) point out. Within these complex systems, the components' mutual interactions bring forth synchrony as a self-organized behavioral pattern. Thus, synchrony is not orchestrated by any of the components nor by a superordinate structure but arises from 'in-between' the components, influencing the individual components' behavior.

For example, Dikker and colleagues (2017) recorded the brain activity of 12 students in their classroom simultaneously during 11 subsequent lessons using portable electroencephalogram (EEG). An analysis of interpersonal patterns within students' brain activity revealed that brain-to-brain synchrony between students predicted class engagement. These results suggest that group attention and cognitive alignment were correlated with higher levels of synchrony within the group's brain waves. Moreover, brain synchrony was enhanced for students who felt closer with each other. Furthermore, a meta-analysis found that the interpersonal neural synchronization between teacher and students predicted learning outcomes (Zhang et al. 2022). Such findings indicate that synchronization can affect the internal state and capacities of those synchronize. Generally speaking, while synchronization occurs between the components of a system, these components' internal organization is also affected. This is particularly relevant for emotional co-regulation, where a person's capacity to regulate own emotions is enhanced by synchronizing with another person (Koole and Tschacher 2016). While synchronization impacts on the people involved, individuals also differ in their propensity to synchronize with others. Bevilacqua (2019) found that brain-to-brain synchrony among students was facilitated by individuals' trait empathy. It is worth mentioning that coordinating and attuning with other people should not be conceived as full-blown synchrony but as a fluctuation between synchronized, de-synchronized, and in-between states (Fuchs and De Jaegher 2009). The more fundamental point here is that these couplings exist at all and across many modalities of measurement.

The perspective of the social field conceives these couplings in 'third-person' data on students' physiology as complementary to their first-person, phenomenological intercorporeality. Moreover, intercorporeality provides a fresh look at phenomena that shape social life at school such as affect contagion (Oberle and Schonert-Reichl 2016), the teacher-student relationship, and classroom climate. The intercorporeal intertwining of the actors in a social constellation gives rise to an atmosphere that colors the lived experience of the interaction:

> "This is accompanied by a holistic impression of the interaction partner and his current state (for example his anger), and by *a feeling for the overall atmosphere* of the shared situation (for example a tense atmosphere)." (Fuchs 2016b, pg. 199, italics mine)

It is this sense of an overall atmosphere of the shared situation that most directly points to the lived experience of the social field, of the 'in-between' as such. The social field is closely related to the notion of climate but emphasizes its phenomenological and embodied dynamics. Moreover, it contends that climate is an 'active player' within an organizational system, imbued with affordances for the actors, as the following section will outline.

3.1.2. Affordance

The social field is perceived as an invitation toward, or discouragement away from, certain action and feeling tendencies, which drawing on the work of Fuchs (2016a; 2016b), are termed as 'affordance.' First introduced by Gibson (1979), affordance denotes the 'action possibility' presented to an organism by its environment, such as a chair being 'sitable', an apple 'eatable,' a door 'openable' etc. In contrast to a stimulus-response-model, affordances are conceived as extended across, or situated 'in-between', organism and environment. Affordances comprise the potential interactions available between organism and objects, as well as among organisms, evoking bodily action impulses as well as affective and cognitive tendencies. In fact, Fuchs (2016b) emphasizes the affective dimension of affordances, such as when "things appear to us as 'interesting', 'expressive', 'attractive', 'repulsive', 'uncanny'" (Fuchs 2016b, pg. 196). It is important to note that these affordances are not objectively given but extend across the person's internal condition and the environment. Thus, affordances are shaped by an interdependency between the offerings of the situation, other people, and the particularities of what a person brings to a situation, such as the motivation, mood, and the habitual reaction tendencies acquired personally in previous experiences. Consequently, there are manifold and diverse features and constellations within any given situation that can possess an affordance.

Objects and situational features afford being used, changed, or left aside. The affordances evoke a corresponding "bodily action readiness" (Fuchs 2016b, pg. 197) such as a 'pull' toward certain interactions over others:

> "Knowingly or unknowingly, we experience a pull toward certain behaviours, thoughts, and ways of being, and a push away from others. The affordances of a social experience have both an affective quality and a degree of intensity. Affordance – the pull toward or push away from specific patterns of thought and related behaviour experienced within a social setting – is a key property of the social field." (Pomeroy and Herrmann 2023, pg. 12)

The tendencies that may get evoked might be to move towards or away from an object or a person (approach vs. avoidance / rejection), to dominate or submit to, or to be with them. For example, the window of a hot classroom may afford being opened, evoking the tendency to move towards it. Moreover, the other actors crucially afford being reacted to as well. As previously described, other people possess particularly affective or 'relational' affordances for one another, evoking bodily resonances in each other that get coupled in intercorporeal cycles. For instance, a joyful affordance will involve the tendency to be with the other person or approach them further, while fear comes along with a tendency to withdraw. Nielsen and

Petersen (2021) use the term 'relational responsivity' to specifically denote these bodily, affective, and cognitive tendencies elicited by relational affordances. Situational and relational features may also interact, shaping more complicated affordances. For example, knowing that the teacher wants the window closed may afford suppressing the impulse of opening it along with feeling resentment. Thus, the interplay between the actors in a social field with one another and with the situational features is founded in affordances - the perceived possible interactions of actors and their environment. In sum, based on the actors' intercorporeality, these affordances shape the overall felt affective atmosphere in a social field.

Within education, it is vital that atmospheres are conducive for children's learning. A phenomenological study of learning atmospheres (Wolf 2019) identified several factors coalescing into the overall atmosphere of a classroom and a school. Among them were personal factors such as the moods of the individuals, spatial and temporal factors such as architecture and the schedule structure defining the rhythm, the space for movement, and, importantly, social factors such as the rituals, codes of conduct, and social roles. Hence, 'relational' and 'contextual' affordances are at play in shaping the field's atmosphere. It is more precise to speak of multiple atmospheres in plural because they may very well be experienced differently by the actors, yet still intersecting and linked via the actors' interaffectivity. This distinction crucially highlights that social situations at school may privilege affordances experienced by the teachers, without due consideration of the students' affordances and experienced atmospheres. Hence, it is crucial to examine how educators can attune to the social field's atmosphere also from the students' perspective and shape it in ways conducive for learning.

These considerations suggest that relational affordances in the classroom, the perceived possibilities for interacting between students and educators, and the felt resonances and action tendencies they evoke, are the central factors of the social life at school. Hence, it is a crucial focus point for qualitative and phenomenological studies.

While the affordances within school life shape how interactions between students, educators, school leaders, and parents are played out, it is vital to consider the history and socialization that have shaped these affordances. Therefore, the next section will explore the notion of habitus.

Habitus

Affordances are shaped by various kinds of learning and socialization processes (Fuchs 2016b). Bourdieu (1998) described the mechanism by which the social field shapes individual behavior with the concept of habitus, i.e., a set of dispositions, tastes, skills, and behavior which is shared by the members of a community, class, or culture. The habitus again illustrates the relationship between the individual and the collective as 'co-embedded': each shape and are shaped by the other, a key dynamic of the social field.

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"The habitus fulfills a function which another philosophy consigns to a transcendental conscience: it is a socialized body, a structured body, a body which has incorporated the immanent structures of a world or of a particular sector of that world – a field – and which structures the perception of that world as well as action in that world." (Bourdieu 1998, pg. 81)

The concept of habitus emphasizes that affordances and responsivities in the social field between educators and students are crucially shaped by socialization processes. The actors' intercorporeal memory "may also be seen as the carrier of the habitus" (Fuchs 2016, pg. 203). This means that, formed by the intercorporeal relationship of its actors, the specific qualities of a social field are 'sedimented' in intercorporeal and interactive memory, and will in turn shape the relational responsivity in future interactions. According to Fuchs, this sedimentation takes various forms ranging from deeply ingrained memories acquired in early childhood interactions in the mother-infant dyad, over the socialized habitus, to a dyadic body memory which is acquired in the history of interaction between two partners.

When it comes to schools, the point has been made in the literature on teacher socialization that teachers are influenced in their behavior by the implicit and deeply ingrained feelings and dispositions developed during their experiences as students (Zeichner and Gore 1989). Moreover, the shared habitus in schools is believed to exert a strong influence on new teachers entering the school, as the unspoken message, even from the pupils, may be: 'please behave as the other teachers do' (Korthagen 2017). Based on Bourdieu's notion of habitus, Nolan (2012) analyzed interviews with student teachers on their practicum, and found that their habitus was marked by a disposition to privilege the covering of content over the actual learning of content based on a discourse of 'not enough time'. A reason for this habitus was the risk of a "penalty for not playing the game according to the rules" such as "a public reprimand from next year's teacher (who taught them math last year that they didn't cover this?), resulting in a feeling of not being professionally competent and accountable in one's job." (ibid. pg. 207).

Other features of educators' habitus may be more directly relational in nature. In this regard, it is an interesting finding in the study about the precursor of the EMS project that the participating student teachers emphasized the need to drop out of a more traditional and authoritarian teachers' role so as to establish good contact with students (Laursen and Nielsen 2016; Nielsen 2016). To conclude with, the affordances of a social field are crucially impacted by the actors' habitus. Moreover, the notion alludes to a tendency in social fields of reproducing themselves, including socialized dynamics such as power hierarchies, which will be outlined in the next section.

3.1.3. Autonomy

A central property of the social field that has so far been only alluded to and requires further articulation is the field's autonomy. It is this very property which really suggests speaking of a 'field'. Bache (2008) defines a field as "a *self-organizing* region of influence, a matrix or medium that connects two or more points in space, usually via a force whose properties may

or may not be initially understood" (ibid. pg. 49). This self-organization is what is here referred to the field's autonomy, using the enactivist concept proposed by De Jaegher and Di Paolo (2007). They studied dyadic coordination and found that in the interaction of two actors whose behaviors get mutually coupled, the interaction process itself can take on ‚a life of its own', acquiring a kind of 'autonomy' (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007). Here, autonomy refers to the phenomenon that the 'in-between' itself is leading in so far as the pre-reflective coordination between two actors can override their intentions, and cause each of them to act and experience in a way that is distinct from the way they would usually outside of the process.

This kind of autonomy is most obvious when an interaction carries on despite the actors' attempts to stop it. Consider for instance two persons trying to pass one another in a corridor by stepping to one side but each person's mirroring of the other's step makes passing impossible (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007). Here, the "'in-between' becomes the source of the operative intentionality of both partners" (Fuchs and De Jaegher 2009, pg. 476). Within a social field, it is not only the persons' bodies and affects that get mutually entangled but also their actions. Moreover, the 'in-between' has a degree of autonomy. Therefore, it in fact makes sense to speak of a 'field' – just like a magnetic force field influences the particles within it, the social field as a whole exerts an autonomous influence over the actors.

This has some remarkable implications. Firstly, no one individual is able to steer the entirety of the process but is instead pulled into the feedback and feed-forward cycles of the interaction. It is the process which can then lead the actions, rather than and above the two actors – which makes it an adventurous and unpredictable endeavor. The person entering an interaction thus has to surrender to some degree to the influence of the field, but what is more: "It is not just that I cannot make the other do what I want (this can happen in interactions with objects too, as e.g., with a computer), it is also that the other, to an extent, makes me" (Fuchs and De Jaegher 2009, pg. 477). This is not to say that any of the actors' autonomy is denied – in fact, it is a precondition for social interaction which does not involve total control or determination (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007). However, it does say that I co-determine the other, and the other co-determines me, and both of us are co-determined by the social field. This kind of 'field autonomy' is not an outlier or a unique event. Rather, it is ubiquitous in everyday social life and founded in intercorporeality, interaffectivity, and interaction. Hence, one can conclude with Friedman and colleagues that social fields "powerfully influence people's thinking, feeling, and actions—and tend to reproduce themselves" (Friedman et al. 2020, pg. 251).

Fields vary in the degree of autonomy; one could speak here of their 'intensity'. While interbodily resonance is ubiquitous and occurs also in brief encounters, such as inside a tram or in a queue in the supermarket, there seems to be a threshold until a social field with a more tangible autonomy gets established. Bache (2008) suggested based on his subjective reflections on his own experience as a lecturer of university courses that

"Usually, the learning fields I've been describing remain below the threshold of our conscious awareness, their effects so subtle as to escape detection. When the right combination of circumstances converge, however, they can become a powerful force in the classroom" (ibid. pg. 61).

He further reflected on the factors contributing to the intensity of the 'learning field', highlighting the role of the resonance between teacher and student, shared intention, emotional engagement, sustained duration as well as the repetition of the same course several times.

The field's varying intensity also raises the more general question of the boundaries and preconditions of social fields. While it seems safe to state that social fields emerge from at minimum two interacting partners, there may also be quasi-fields of interbodily resonance even before any behavioral interaction occurs. As with systems, the question of the field's boundaries is crucial. For the purpose of this current study, the field boundaries can be pragmatically delineated according to the interview partners' sense-making. These boundaries encompass the interacting partners at the micro-level of dyadic interactions between educator and student or parent, as well as within the classroom. At the meso-level, social fields can be found within the faculty and the whole-school. These levels form distinct and nested fields each possessing its own discernable autonomy, involving repeated and mutual interactions. Furthermore, the actors are more or less invested in these interactions and are mutually interdependent in terms of attaining meaningful implicit and explicit goals and needs.

Patterns of Interactions

The implications of this autonomy can be delineated more precisely by drawing on the field of family therapy where the phenomenon has been taken up and expanded upon. Tomm and colleagues (2014) maintain that autonomous, recurring patterns shape the relational life of all sorts of social formations over long periods of time. They have come to conceptualize "the connection as existing *between the behaviors* in the interpersonal space, and not within either person's character" (Tomm et al. 2014, pg. 17, italics mine). Such patterns of interactions are conceived as relatively stable so that the individual's roles and behaviors can sometimes even be flipped without altering the nature of the pattern. For instance, in one situation Person A may participate in a pattern by 'criticizing' the other and Person B by 'defending', while in another situation they readily exchange roles with B 'criticizing' and A 'defending'. This role flipping illustrates once more the interaction's autonomy, where the pattern drives the behavior, not the individuals. It is the power of the pattern itself, rather than solely A's ,criticizing', which evokes B a pull towards 'defending'. Drawing on Maturana and Varela (1980), Tomm and colleagues frame this as one behavior *inviting* another. Thus, the nature of the coupling is one of *mutual invitations* – defying any linear determinism. In the formation and maintenance of recurrent patterns, the invitations are mostly quite compelling and are typically taken up. Nevertheless, the authors maintain that is possible not to go along with an invitation, emphasizing the possibility for personal agency toward change.

The interpersonal patterns in which actors are participating exert a strong influence on their experience and their mental health (Tomm et al. 2014), as reflecting in research findings on the teacher-student relationship and its effects on students and teachers (Hargreaves 2000; Sabol and Pianta 2012). However, while its effects have been well documented, there is a need to further develop a more rigorous and systematic understanding of the field autonomy in school settings. Here, advancements can be made by learning from contributions of clinical psychology. Tomm and colleagues (2014) developed a diagnostic framework for families and couples called 'IPScope' providing a typology of autonomous patterns occurring in interpersonal interactions. Among these patterns, some are 'pathologizing' the participants, creating clinical symptoms and suffering while other patterns have 'healing' and 'wellness' effects, increasing the actors' well-being and health. These effects can be recurrent, but also cumulative, or even escalating in nature as reported for instance from research on romantic couples (Gottman and Gottman 2015). Main types of interactions proposed by Tomm and colleagues (2014) include:

• 'Wellness interpersonal patterns' enable generativity and competence of one or both actors; they sustain or enhance a wholesome relationship. Examples include 'listening attentively' coupled with 'sharing difficulties', 'acknowledging the other' coupled with 'acknowledging the acknowledgment', as well as couplings of 'giving affection and providing care' with 'accepting affection and providing care' or 'setting limits and maintaining boundaries' with 'accepting limits and respecting boundaries'. Here, both actors experience the interaction as supportive.

• 'Pathologizing interpersonal patterns' bring forth or increase negativity or suffering in one or both actors, and/or they deteriorate the relationship. These types of patterns create or maintain negative psychophysiological symptoms. Examples include 'criticizing' coupled with 'defending', or a coupling of 'pressuring' with 'rebelling', or 'judging' and 'protesting'.

• 'Deteriorating interpersonal patterns' are transition patterns indicating the movement or shift from a positive interaction into a negative and pathologizing one. Examples include 'scrutinizing performance' coupled with 'performing self-consciously and awkwardly' or a coupling of 'reminding' with 'procrastinating', or 'seeking attention' with 'ignoring.

• Healing interpersonal pattern are transition patterns indicating a shift from a pathologizing towards a wellbeing pattern. They provide an antidote to a particular pathologizing pattern and thereby interrupt or counter pathologizing dynamics, bringing forth positive behaviors or experiences in one or both actors. These are patterns that decrease or eliminate the negative symptoms between and within two people. Examples would be the coupling of 'listening empathically' with 'de-escalating blame towards others', 'selective noticing of competence' with 'enacting more competence', or 'encouraging' with 'risking to show up'.

While the interaction patterns have been articulated within the field of family therapy, they may very well be applicable to interactions in school contexts. In fact, Juul and Jensen (2012) have proposed that interpersonal processes within schools create, maintain, or heal

symptoms in one of the actors. The authors further argue that within any social formation, including educational institutions, a mixture of these three kinds of interpersonal processes will be found. With reference to Scheff's (1990) theory of interpersonal relationships and Aspelin and Jonsson's (2019) definition of teacher relational competence, pathologizing and deteriorating patterns of interaction may be ones that threaten or cut off the social bond, while healing patterns may repair and strengthen the social bond, and wellness patterns maintain stable bonds. Here, the patterns of interactions can explain 'burnout contagion' among educators, where their intercorporeality and interaffectivity are marked by bodily resonances that carry physiological charge, which get stabilized in repetitive pathologizing interaction patterns and 'sedimented' in the actors' intra-bodily resonance with long-term physiological effects. Conversely, the healing and wellness patterns of interaction involve a soothing or encouraging interaffectivity between an at-risk student and the class teacher, and, hence, provides a protective function for that child.

Thus, a thorough investigation of the 'in-between' should attempt to re-construct the patterns of interactions as an expression of the field's autonomy. Importantly, this perspective is broad enough to capture both negative, 'pathologizing', and positive, 'generative' patterns, as well as mixed patterns, with the same degree of accuracy. Considering the potential positive and negative effects of relationships on actors' health and learning, this perspective should be privileged to reliably study and explain these phenomena.

Importantly, social fields are not limited to dyadic interactions, but they also encompass groups and organizations. For the autonomous pattern shaping individual and collective behavior within organizations, the term 'organizational culture' has been coined (Schein, 2010). In a reflection on the absence of culture as a focus in early organizational development, Schein (1996) highlights its pervasive and powerful influence,

> "We acknowledged the existence of group norms but failed to note that norms across wider social units such as entire organizations or occupations had a decisive influence on how those systems operated. And if we thought those norms were inimical to 'organizational health,' we glibly called for leaders to change them. We did not grasp that norms held tacitly across large social units were much more likely to change leaders than to be changed by them. We failed to note that 'culture,' viewed as such taken-for-granted, shared, tacit ways of perceiving, thinking, and reacting, was one of the most powerful and stable forces operating in organizations." (Schein 1996, pg. 231)

In this comment we see the description of a force or entity that is largely independent of specific leader behavior and that bears influence on it. Hence, the autonomous patterns of interaction form an important focus point for a phenomenological study of social life at school both on a dyadic micro-level and on a meso-level of school and faculty climate and culture. On either level, the attempts to improve the relationship quality and climate can thus be conceived of attempts to shift patterns of interactions and their corresponding affordances and responsivities.

Summing up, the social field is characterized by the interplay of its three basic properties, intercorporeality, affordance, and autonomy. Intercorporeality is the mechanism through which autonomy comes into being. The nature, or quality, of the autonomous patterns of interactions is determined by their affordance(s). The strength of the affordance varies in intensity, involving the pull toward or push away from particular tendencies of thought or action shaping autonomous patterns. The dynamic feedback loops between the properties are illustrated in Figure 2.
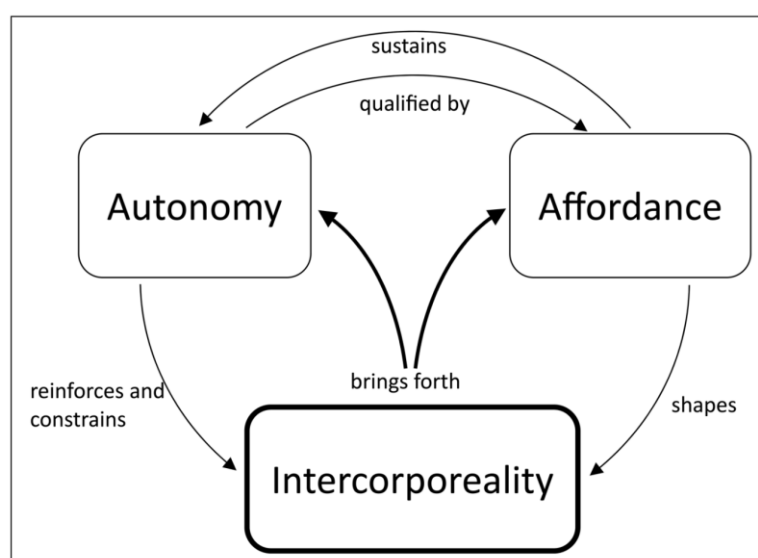
Figure 2: The dynamic properties of social fields (taken from Pomeroy & Herrmann 2023)

3.2. Relational Awareness

Having outlined the concept of the social field, it can be used to sharpen the understanding of relational competence. As proposed by the enactivist approach to (social) cognition and affect, the mental and affective processes involved in understanding another person must be regarded as enacted, embodied, embedded, as well as extended into its situational context (Gallagher 2017). The enactivist perspective criticizes the assumption of a competence, ability, or skill merely pertaining to an isolated and de-contextualized individual or homunculus. This de-contextualized view would inevitably raise the question of how such a competence is specifically enacted in a given situation and how the features and forces within a given context operate in favor or detrimental to enacting this competence. From a social fields perspective, the context appears as an 'active player'. Therefore, 'relationally competent' behavior is seen as embedded within intertwined bodily and affective resonances and an overarching affective atmosphere, experienced as momentary pulls, and pushes towards certain actions, shaped by and giving rise to autonomous patterns of interaction. In short, relational competence must be enacted and embodied by the person-in-field.

Some implications of this view have been articulated by Nielsen and Petersen (2021) in their pioneering formulation of 'relational awareness.'

"Relational awareness conceptualises an embodied and mediated awareness of the extended intercorporeal affectivity and resonance. It can be experienced as an immediate response and as an embodied reflection perceived as an impulse, affectivity, a mood, an emotion, or a conscious reflective line of thought" (ibid. pg. 147).

Relational awareness is different from social awareness (Zins et al. 2004) due to its emphasis on intercorporeality as a stepping-off point for social understanding. While social awareness involves understanding the mental and affective states of another person, relational awareness goes beyond this notion, including an awareness of the bodily and affective resonance between self and other. Relational awareness thereby not only involves an understanding of the other but an awareness of the felt responsivities within an interaction including an immediate and embodied sense of how own actions may be received by the other (see chapter 2.2.1 for a comparison between definitions of relational competence and its component of attunement).

Drawing on interview data from a precursor of the EMS project, Nielsen and Petersen (2021) outline how the participants experience and enact relational awareness:

"They [the participants] appeared to become aware of their relational responsivity in situations in which their intuitive understanding or expectation did not fit the situation, or in situations characterised by contradictions. They seemed able to engage in bodily practices (such as breathing exercises or tiny body scans), and by doing so they became aware of some of the dynamics in their specific relational responsivity" (ibid. pg. 141)

What is depicted here is the educators' awareness of their responsivity which is part of the intercorporeal intertwinement between them and the students, colleagues, or parents. Thus, relational awareness denotes the situationally embedded, conscious awareness of the embodied, relational responsivity. The concept bears some similarities with 'reiterated empathy' which according to Fuchs (2017) integrates embodied resonance with affective and cognitive perspective-taking and with the self-other distinction and thus "combines intercorporeality, interaffectivity, and intersubjectivity – being aware of the other as other – thereby enabling a truly interpersonal relation" (ibid. pg. 42).

Crucially, relational awareness is not merely as a 'pathic' perception. Rather, it entails an activity of becoming aware of the bodily and affective resonances and sensations termed here as 'responsivity'. It must be understood that the responsivities usually tend to go unnoticed, despite getting evoked during an interaction and shaping its course. Therefore, an activity or practice is needed to bring them into awareness. This practice "involves embodied activity mediated by methods of behaviour, motives and social means of language and discourse" (Nielsen and Petersen 2021, pg. 141). In that sense, the 'rela project' participants acquired skillfulness in relational awareness, among other things by mindfulness or self-compassion practices, e.g., conscious breathing, sensing the body, or by inwardly 'naming' sensations, feelings, or thoughts – and returning to such a practice at a conjuncture during an interaction. In such 'moments of hesitation' (Biesta 2012), when educators felt that they were relationally addressed by their students, relational awareness enabled them to act more intentionally.

This is illustrated by the example of a student teacher's account about his interaction with two girls who did not participate in an experiment during a lesson and appeared to be reluctant to learn which was tolerated by the main teacher. When the main teacher was absent, the student teacher approached the girls, able to 'contain' his felt nervousness, and bent down next to them asking what they had difficulties with, which resulted in them joining in. Nielsen and Petersen analyze the account pointing to the 'objectification' of the felt responsivity of arousal as 'nervousness':

> "Interwoven with his methods of breathing behaviour, the mediating objectification of his intercorporeal relational responsivity helped him to become relationally aware and 'contain his insecurity'. When Sam arrived at the girls' desk, he was presently aware and his intercorporeal memory provided him with an intuitive understanding of the girls' perspective, and he bent down to look them in the eye and to offer them his friendly interest and support." (Nielsen and Petersen 2021, pg. 146)

Crucially, the notion of relational awareness is an important step towards conceiving relational competence as embedded in a social field.

3.3. Generative Social Fields

This study on social fields is embedded within a larger research initiative aiming at understanding the conditions that cause to social fields to become 'generative' (Boell and Senge 2017; Scharmer and Kaufer 2013; Scharmer 2021; Siegel 2020). Generative social fields are environments that nurture a sense of belonging, trust, and mutual support which enable individuals to take risks and try new avenues of learning, creative thought, and action (Siegel 2020). Within education, generative social fields are believed to be crucial (Boell and Senge 2017). As of yet, a coherent terminology and definition for generative social fields has not been introduced and established. However, there are a number of guiding ideas circumscribing the phenomenon of interest. These ideas were largely derived from practice, since the notion of generative social fields was first developed within the domain of organizational and systems change, encompassing approaches such as the 'Five Disciplines' of systems thinking and organizational learning (Senge 1990), 'Appreciative Inquiry' (Whitney and Cooperrider 2005), and, most explicitly, in 'Theory U' (Scharmer 2009; Scharmer and Kaufer 2013; Scharmer 2021).

These practitioners and scholars have begun to conceptualize profound systemic and social change processes, involving phenomena such as deepening trust, openness, synchronicity, and collective creativity, in terms of social fields, as Boell and Senge (2017) elucidate:

> "In recent years, we have taken to thinking of these phenomena as indicators of shifts in underlying social fields rather than as arising only from individuals or singular events – inspired by how 19th century physicists began shifting attention from focusing exclusively on particles to field dynamics and thereby laid the

foundation for radical breakthroughs like quantum mechanics in the 20th century." (Boell and Senge 2017, pg. 32)

Various characteristics of generative social fields have been proposed. The most central ones include creativity, connectedness, and integration, as well as a propagating quality. Creativity is considered to manifest as novel ideas, solutions, learning, and growth. Scharmer (2009) describes this creativity as a capacity to sense 'emergent future possibilities'. The proposed high levels of co-creation and innovation partly overlap with a group's ability to enter states of group flow and synchrony (Pels et al. 2018). Additionally, it has also been depicted as a more disruptive and critical quality, such as in Gergen's definition of generativity as the "capacity to challenge the guiding assumptions of the culture, to raise fundamental questions regarding contemporary social life, to foster reconsideration of that which is 'taken for granted' and thereby furnish new alternatives for social actions" (Gergen 1978, pg. 346).

Creativity appears to flourish in generative social fields that emerge when actors engage with each other in a relational space with an increased intentionality and willingness to connect. The quality of the connections within these fields is characterized by attunement, resonance, and trust (Boell and Senge 2017; Siegel 2019), leading to positive affect including kindness, warmth, and a sense of closeness among the actors (Siegel 2020). Using the work of Tomm and colleagues (2014), generative fields propagate patterns of interactions conducive to the actors' healing and well-being (Tomm et al. 2014).

Flow and connectedness in a social field have often been associated with peak states of synchrony in the physiological coupling between agents (Hu et al. 2022). Conversely, it has also been argued that a balanced, mid-range synchrony is favorable for high-quality relationships. For example, the relationship between therapist and client and therapy outcomes are facilitated by mid-level rather than maximum synchrony (Koole and Tschacher 2016). Thus, while states of synchrony are a relevant for studying the entanglements within social fields, they are naturally fluctuating and do not fully capture the essence of generative fields. If anything, the present state of research may suggest that a flexibility in shifting between synchronized and de-synchronized states be favorable.

Alongside connectedness, generative fields also encourage diversity and the surfacing of interpersonal tensions, including conflicting interests, needs, and disagreements. These conflicts are held within the field and resolved in generative ways, promoting growing integration. This aligns with Siegel's notion of a "field that honors differences and promotes linkages" (cited in Boell and Senge 2017, pg. 102). Moreover, Siegel contextualizes the integrative nature of generative fields within the framework of attachment research:

> "With secure attachment, the experience that is capable of being cultivated is one of connection, collaboration, compassion, creativity, and belonging. When these positive emotional states are not present, as may happen in ongoing relationships no matter how secure, then a repair is made of that mismatch and reconnection as a generative field is reestablished." (Siegel 2020, pg. 430)

A generative social field is not one where ruptures, conflicts, and mismatches between the members of the field are denied and avoided but one where they initiate an integrative process. This process involves acknowledging differences, showing compassion for vulnerabilities, and repairing relational disruptions. Thus, instead of leading to conflict escalation or the deterioration of wellbeing, the irritations stimulate the field's development. Siegel contends that thereby, both intra- and intrapersonal integration are fostered in a mutually reinforcing way.

Moreover, Boell (2018) suggests that generative social fields possess a 'propagating' quality akin to that of physical fields. This propagating quality aligns with the notion of 'autonomy', proposed earlier. Perhaps, when social fields turn generative, their autonomy increases.

To sum up, generative social fields are described as creative, connected, integrative, and propagating. Thereby, the notion of a generative social field may provide a useful lens to study relationships at schools. These proposed qualities and indicators of a field's generativity overlap with concepts of relational competence, and 'positive' relational qualities and climate. The relational quality among the actors at school, foremost teachers and students, has been described from different conceptual angles and disciplines including philosophy (Aspelin 2017a; Buber 2023), psychology (Juul and Jensen 2017), attachment theory (Pianta et al. 2003), and biology (Maturana and Verden-Zöller 2012; Siegel 2020).

One approach to define the relationship quality has been to describe the immediate process between two people, involving for instance phenomena such as conflict, vicious interaction cycles, affect contagion (Jennings and Greenberg 2009), or, on the positive side, co-regulation, attunement, and responsivity. As discussed above, attunement appears to promote the closeness and integration of a field (Siegel 2020), while differentiation (Aspelin and Jonsson 2019; Stierlin 1989) plays a role in a field's integrative quality. This approach refers largely to the social field's autonomy. Another quality aspect focuses on the affective tone and atmosphere (the field affordance) such as mutual positive affect and enjoyment (Pianta et al. 2003). Positive affect has also been described as a marker of a generative social field (Siegel 2020). Furthermore, the quality of a relationship can be examined by reviewing its 'products', for example, in terms of psychological, behavioral, or somatic symptoms in one or more persons involved (Juul and Jensen 2017) (indicating what one may term 'degenerativity'), as well as the degree to which it promotes of social and emotional development, well-being, and learning (its generativity).

Alongside these psychological terms, generative relational qualities have also been described drawing from the relational philosophy of Martin Buber (2023). Specifically, two types of bonding were proposed (Aspelin 2017a; Aspelin 2020). One the one hand, 'social bonding' involves the verbal and nonverbal communication within more stereotypical interactions which are based on the scripts and roles of teacher and student, and which are ubiquitous in the teaching situation. On the other hand, 'relational bonding' means that the teacher is directly involved with the student "as this particular person" (Aspelin 2020, pg. 595). Similarly, Maturana and Verden-Zöller (2012) emphasized the importance of "relational behaviors

through which another arises as a legitimate other in coexistence with oneself" (ibid. pg. 223). This relational quality of allowing one another to arise in one's particularity and legitimacy may be a core feature of generative social fields.

Using a bottom-up approach, generative qualities can also be identified by explicating the relational knowing of educators holding legitimate authority, as perceived by their students. A qualitative study by Roberson (2014) interviewed educators who were described accordingly by their students, which was confirmed by triangulating student descriptions with classroom observations. These educators highlighted that they cared for students by being attentive to students' needs and by learning about their students on a personal level – as suggested by attachment theory. Furthermore, in alignment with the reciprocal nature of a field, the educators pointed out that they had to respect their students if they wanted respect in return, and, similarly, that students' trust could be built over time through educators' responsiveness, but also their willingness to disclose their own limitations.

However, research on generative social fields is in its early stages, and further theoretical, methodological, and empirical advancements are necessary. There is an evident lack of empirical studies on the concept. Therefore, an understanding of field shifts can provide valuable knowledge in various areas of change, both within and beyond education.

This thesis aims to contribute to the field of research by proposing three basic properties of social fields: intercorporeality, affordance, and autonomy. These properties serve as starting points for a more thorough investigation of the embodied and experienced qualities related to generative social fields. For instance, the autonomy of generative social fields can be assessed in terms of their ability to promote well-being and healing patterns of interactions, such as repairing ruptures when they occur. This thesis is – to the best knowledge of the author – the first empirical study on social fields and their potential shifts that explicitly utilizes this conceptual lens. The intention is to further develop the conceptualization of (generative) social fields in light of the empirical data provided by the EMS project.

3.4. Aims and Objectives

The overarching aim of this study was a qualitative evaluation of the intervention, focusing on the implementation process. To this end, the study adopted a multi-perspectival approach integrating the leader and staff perspectives on the shifts and stabilities of relational processes elicited at the schools during EMS.

Specifically, the aims and objectives of the study were:

1. Reconstruction of social field shifts experienced by educators and leaders on multiple systems levels during EMS
    1.1. Micro-level: Teacher-student and teacher-parent interactions
    1.2. Meso-level: Faculty and leadership
2. Identification of factors hindering or helping the implementation process of the EMS project.

The study's corresponding research questions included:

1. How do the school educators and leaders from three diverse case-schools reflect on experiencing and enacting changes in their social fields due to EMS?
   1.1. Specific interactions with students and parents (micro-level)
   1.2. Developments within the school faculty (meso-level)
2. Which are helping and hindering factors in the process of implementing the EMS whole-school approach?

4. Material and Methods

This study was part of a longitudinal research project by the Institute for Medical Psychology at the University Hospital Heidelberg focusing on a whole-school intervention in elementary schools (German title: 'Ein Ganzheitlicher Ansatz zur Entwicklung von Beziehungskompetenz & Empathie' (GEBE-Studie). Longitudinale Studie zur multimodalen Evaluation eines Empathie-Trainings in Grundschulen"). The 'Empathie macht Schule' intervention and the GEBE study were funded by AVE ('Institut für Achtsamkeit, Verbundenheit und Engagement') and ALV foundation. AVE and ALV had no influence on the design of the study, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation or dissemination of the results.

Ethical approval was obtained from the ethics committee of the medical faculty of Heidelberg (S-526/2019) prior to the data collection and written informed consent was obtained from the participants of the study. Approval for carrying out research at the schools was also obtained from the Berlin Senate.

4.1. Research Design

The overall research project adopted a converging explanatory mixed methods design (Creswell 2014; Creswell and Clark 2017). The project evaluated the effects of the EMS intervention collecting quantitative data from staff and students of the three schools participating in EMS and three control schools at multiple timepoints before, during, and after the intervention. The control schools were matched according to the school district's socio-economic status. Furthermore, multiple types of qualitative data were collected from the three intervention schools to follow the development processes in depth and over time.

Within this qualitative part, this study collected data from school leaders and educators at multiple timepoints before and during the intervention to gain insight about changes in the schools' social fields. Moreover, the study conducted a cross-sectional assessment of educators' perspectives after their completion of the training modules on experienced shifts in interactions with students and parents. See Figure 3.
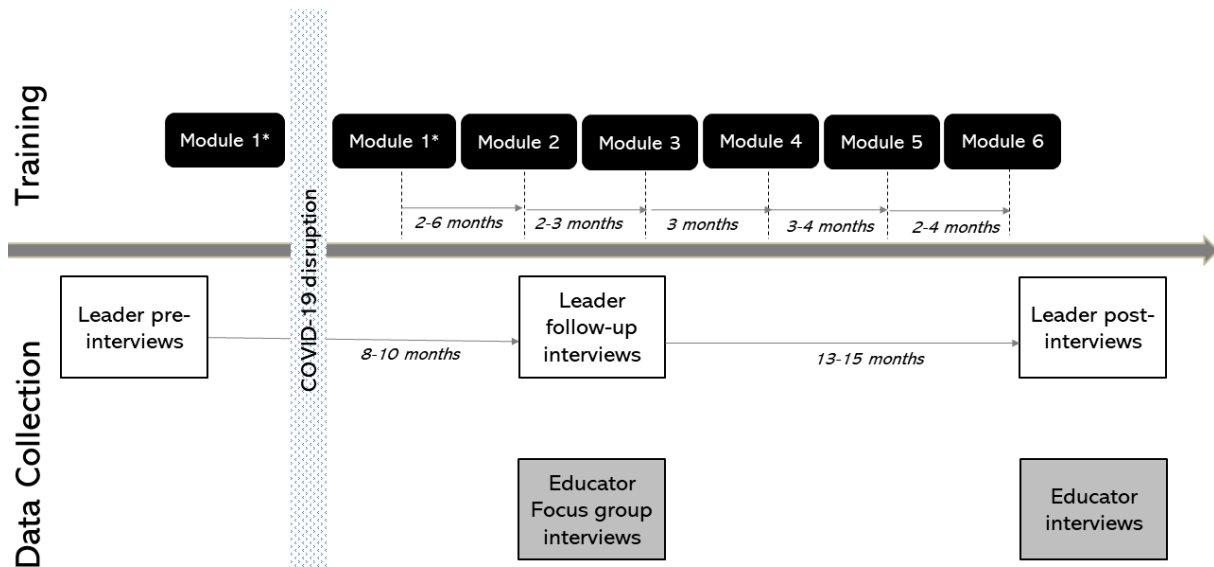
Figure 3: Qualitative data collection and EMS training phases

The primary data sources of this study are qualitative interviews with school leaders and educators. The qualitative data collected throughout this thesis included also other types of data collections:

- Repeated qualitative interviews with school leaders from the three intervention schools, before, during, and after the training modules of the first cohort and the corresponding leadership training modules (in the following referred to as 'leader pre- and post-interviews')
- Qualitative focus group interviews with educators after the second training module (in the following referred to as 'focus group interviews')
- Qualitative interviews with educators (one schoolteacher and one pedagogue from each intervention school) after the completion of the six training modules (in the following referred to as 'educator interviews')

As can be seen in Figure 3, the longitudinal data collection intended to enable a close examination of the informants' perspectives over the course of the intervention and after completing it.

4.2. Intervention

The EMS training was developed by Danish family therapist and school psychologist Helle Jensen in collaboration with Jesper Juul and the Danish Society for the Promotion of Life Wisdom in children (Juul et al. 2012), in particular the work of Juul and Jensen (2017) and Jensen (2014). Prior to EMS, programs with similar content and methodology have been carried out by Helle Jensen, such as a training devised to teachers-in-training in Denmark (Jensen et al. 2015). This section will present the core components (4.2.1.) and contents (4.2.2.) of the EMS project.

4.2.1. Components and Structure

The EMS program comprised the following components:

- Six modules with a duration from 2.5 to 3 days per module for the school staff, including teachers, other pedagogical professions, and administrative staff
- Repeated training sessions for the school leaders (principals, co-principals, and after-school leaders)
- Family engagement components
- After completion of the six modules, the educators engaged in a supervised collegial reflection process. This process included six 3-hour sessions over the course of one school year. In these sessions, the participants practiced a specific dialogue practice (outlined below), which they had learned during the modules, under the guidance and support of EMS facilitators. Due to time constrictions, the data collection of this study did not cover this supervised collegial reflection process.

The program modules included six training hours per day and were carried out off-site in the EMS project's seminar space in Berlin, except module 5, which was carried out virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the respective modules (one to six), the following themes were covered:

1. personal-professional development and well-being (incl. self-compassion and mindfulness)
2. relational competence (following the definition by Juul and Jensen 2017); empathy, attachment needs
3. challenging relationships and conflicts with students; children with special needs
4. bereavement and loss
5. collaboration with parents
6. cooperation among colleagues (specific focus on the collegial reflection dialogues)

4.2.2. Techniques and Practices

Throughout all modules, the approach of this program was at its core a combination of developing relational competence with cultivating the so-called 'innate competences' including mindfulness, somatic awareness, compassion for self and others, and creativity (Juul et al. 2012).

The modules employed a wide array of techniques and practices, ranging from dialogues in dyads, triads, and small grous, various guided meditations (e.g., focused attention on innate competences), contemplative dyads (Kok and Singer 2017) to movement games. Moreover, role plays (with educators also taking on the child's role) were employed and practical examples were provided to illustrate core concepts such as relational competence (see definition by Juul and Jensen 2017, Table 1) and other psychologically-informed concepts on the relationships at schools by Juul and Jensen (2017). Most of the body-based and meditative practices could equally be carried out by the educators in classroom settings to

help themselves and their students 'shift gears' from a state of calm to a more active state and vice-versa (see also below structure of module days). For descriptions, see Jensen (2014). An important principle introduced and practiced throughout the program was termed '60 : 40'. This term refers to the act of distributing one's awareness both within oneself (60%) and on the situation and the others around (40%). The term highlights and works counter to the tendency during daily life and interactions to have all awareness directed outward without paying attention to how oneself feels, is affected by the situation, and acts within it. Various exercises were devised to practice '60 : 40' (Jensen 2014).

Core Dialogue Exercise

This guided dialogue played a central role in the program and was repeatedly practiced in modules two through six, as well as in the subsequent supervision phase. It will therefore be outlined in some detail. The goal of this guided dialogue was to support educators in cultivating relational competence within the challenges of their daily work, alongside creating a supportive and empathic climate among colleagues. The exercise was practiced in triads, comprising the roles of a focus person, a dialogue partner, and a helping observer.

The process comprised five steps, lasting up to ten to fifteen minutes each: Firstly, the focus person was asked to describe a specific challenging workplace interaction with a student or parent, and, secondly, to state where she or he needed support. Thirdly, the dialogue partner supported the focus person to inquire into her own lived experience of this challenging situation and the relational responsivity, including the emotions, bodily sensations, breathing, and thoughts, and how this affected the capacity for compassion, the meta-awareness over the situation, and the capacity to find creative ways of responding to the challenge. A forth step was to take the student's perspective on the situation, attempting to infer about the motivation and need underlying their actions. A fifth step was to reflect on constructive ways in which the focus person can shape this relationship in future interactions. Specifically, how the focus person can attune to the other and acknowledge their feelings and intentions while also staying in a leadership role by expressing oneself authentically and with integrity to own intentions and goals.

Throughout the exercise, the dialogue partner turned to the observer for a joint reflection on the focus person's challenge. The same exercise was also practiced with examples of challenging interactions with parents.

Structure of Module Days

The training module days were structured based on the notion of 'gear shifts', referring to alterations between activation and relaxed focus, as well as between inward, private reflection and interpersonal and group interaction. Therefore, throughout the day, activities with a focus on dialogue alternated with movement and meditation, group games, input, experiential learning units, and feedback rounds or discussions. Input in the form of presentations or talks was usually illustrated using brief exercises which activate sensory and somatic experiences of the content, as well as with many concrete examples from school life.

Usually, participants were asked to find examples from their own daily work in relation to the content, and to reflect on their own experiences which they could share in the training groups.

The program did not involve any prescribed curriculum which educators were obliged to carry out in the classroom with the students. However, it provided suggestions for classroom activities to enact 'gear shifts', depending on the perceived state of activation or readiness for learning in the classroom.

4.2.3. Program Providers

The modules were led by one of the two project leaders along with one or two co-facilitators. The project leaders were Helle Jensen, a Danish school psychologist, supervisor, trainer, and family therapist with several decades of experience working with educators across Europe, along with a German colleague, heading a family therapy training institute and working as family therapist, trainer, and supervisor. The co-facilitators (N = 11) comprised a team working professionally as psychologists, psychotherapists, family consultants, teachers, special pedagogues, mediators, and supervisors. They had completed either a three-year long empathy training or a four-year long family therapy training with the project leader, or both.

4.2.4. Adaptations to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Several adaptations of the interventions had to be made due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, modules were postponed due to lockdown so that the training modules of the first cohort were carried out spread out over 21 months between March 2020 and December 2021 (see Figure 3). Other adaptations included carrying out modules virtually, and adapting the methodology to the hygienic measures, e.g., by discarding certain movement exercises and any exercises involving touch. Furthermore, training group size had to be split in halves due to spatial restrictions and to prevent contamination, and participants at times had to wear medical face masks, depending on the current regulations. Additionally, adapting to the demands during this uncertain and volatile period required increased administrative and organizational efforts. Consequently, a great deal of time scheduled for leadership training sessions during the first year of the pandemic had to be dedicated to these issues and significantly reduced the leaders' training dosage. Lastly, the EMS modules were adapted to the leaders' and educators' challenges during the pandemic (Herrmann et al. 2021).

4.3. Sample

4.3.1. Intervention Schools and Training Cohort

The EMS project's sites of intervention comprise three urban elementary schools situated in socioeconomically diverse districts in Berlin, Germany. At the timepoint of the data collection, a total of ca. 1,250 students attended the three schools (school A: 434; school B: 442; school C: 402) and their faculty comprised ca. 130 faculty members (school A: 39; school B: 33; school C: 48).

The faculty of these schools participated in the EMS training in two sequential cohorts. The sampling of the cohorts was carried out randomly, depending on the practicalities, and constrained by the school administration's resource planning. The training for cohort 1 started in March 2020 and finished the last training module in November 2021; cohort 2 started in February 2022 and finished training in April 2023. 88 school staff members participated in the first cohort (school A: 31; school B: 26; school C: 31). Interview data was obtained only from the participants of the first cohort and from school leaders (N = 7).

Each cohort consisted of four training groups. Training groups had been planned to comprise 23 educators per group. The pandemic required continual adjustments depending on the changing regulations in place. To comply with hygienic measures, the four training groups were divided into eight half-sized training groups.

4.3.2. Sampling

To obtain rich and nuanced data from various school professionals' perspectives, in-depth interviews were carried out with participants (total N = 16) upholding different professional roles within each school. This sampling procedure was influenced by the following considerations. The data should capture the complexity of the implementation process, as well as educators' lived experiences of interactions with students and parents, next to longitudinal developments in faculty climate. Hence, a main consideration was that the sample should be sufficiently diverse to provide rich and nuanced data. Since schools are organizations which comprise multiple professional actors and hierarchical positions, it appeared to be preferable to include the perspectives of some of the most common professions at schools in the sample. Hence, sampling was based on the criterion of profession (Patton 2002) and data was collected from school leaders, teachers, and other pedagogical professionals. Furthermore, it was important to include the perspectives from all these actors from each of the three interventions schools.

It is worth mentioning that the sampling procedure prioritized profession and diversity over other possible criteria, such any criterion related to 'data saturation'. Specifically, the idea of data saturation implies that data can be exhaustively interpreted until no further themes 'emerge' from it, which is a claim inconsistent with constructivist epistemological position adopted in this study (see later section on data analysis). In line with Braun and Clarke (2021b), the approach of this study maintains that meaning does not passively reside in the data, but it must be actively generated by the interpreter. Therefore, rather than data saturation, the aim was richness and complexity of the data.

4.3.3. Recruitment

The three elementary schools participating in EMS were recruited by means of various communication channels, including e-mails to headmasters of 107 Berlin elementary schools, and a presentation at a school leader assembly. Eligibility criteria for the school's participation comprised: Regular, state-run elementary schools with a faculty size of 40 - 50 members; half-day school with after-school program; private and all-day schools were excluded.

Furthermore, schools needed to obtain a majority vote of the faculty in favor of the participation in the EMS project. From the schools which expressed their interest in participating in the project, three schools were sampled from municipalities representing a social economic diversity, one of which ranks as a high-risk school which receives special district funding.

The leadership teams were comprised of the principal and co-principal of each school. In one school, the co-principal stepped down from her position between the first and second interview and hence, was not included in the second and third interview. Depending on the structure and condition of each school, the leadership team also consisted of the after-school leader.

The participants for the overall research project were recruited through information events and presentations at each school, informing the faculty about the EMS project and the study, including both the quantitative and qualitative parts.

From each school, one teacher and one after-school pedagogue were recruited by e-mailing all EMS participants in cohort 1. Given to the demands of the pandemic, only a small number of educators responded to repeated recruitment e-mails. Therefore, the study followed a convenience sampling procedure, conducting interviews with the educators who responded to the e-mail and were available and willing to participate. It was ensured that from each school, interviews were conducted with both teachers, as well as other pedagogical staff including special education teachers (German: Sonderpädagog*innen) and childcare workers (German: Erzieher*innen).

Furthermore, focus group interviews were conducted with four educators (teachers and child care workers; one to two from each school) who participated in the first training module in March 2020, prior to the lockdown.

Participation in the study was voluntary for all study participants, was not counted as working time and could be terminated at any time without personal or professional disadvantages. Furthermore, participation in the study was not rewarded with financial or similar incentives. Before starting the study, all study participants were informed in writing and verbally about the course and purpose of the study and the respective study elements, the data protection guidelines, and the handling of the collected data. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants.

4.4. Data Collection

This study intended to collect diverse and rich data about educators' and school leaders' reflections during the EMS intervention which could be used to answer the multiple research questions. To this end, a variety of interview methods and protocols were employed with different samples of informants throughout the process. See Table 2 for an overview of the data collected.

Generally, qualitative interviews – both individually and with focus groups – were chosen as method which allows to explore reflections, interactions, and experiences in a way which takes the schools' and classrooms' contexts seriously and gives room to the particularities of each case (Brinkmann and Kvale 2018). The interviews aimed at eliciting reflections and the underlying constructions of meaning concerning relationships at school, climate, and the EMS implementation process. Within this overall approach, a combination of different types interviews seemed appropriate to account for the various research purposes, as will be outlined in the following section.

Table 2: Overview of data source, method, and sample size

Data source	Method	Sample size	# Transcripts
Primary Data			
School leader	Repeated qualitative interviews	3 leadership teams Total N = 7	9
Educator	Qualitative interviews	N = 7	7
Secondary data			
Educator	Microphenomenological interview	N = 1	1
	Focus group interview	Total N = 4	2

4.4.1. Qualitative Interviews with School Leaders

Three sequential semi-structured interviews were conducted with the school leaders before the beginning of the EMS training, and after the first COVID-19 lockdown, and after the first cohort completed their training modules (see Figure 3).

The first interview protocol (see Appendix C1) was created to elicit leaders' reflections on their own and their school's values, their view of the relational climate at the schools, their motivation for joining the EMS project, and the school's current challenges. The interview included the use of artifacts to create a systems map of the school's current reality and challenges. The intention behind this was to stimulate the interviewee's sense-making about their school as a system.

In the second follow-up interview (see Appendix C2), the leaders were asked about their experiences and reflections concerning the impact of the COVID-19 and the relationships within the learning community. For validation purposes, these follow-up interviews also involved a member checking on the main themes from the previous interviews.

The third interview had two phases (see Appendix C3). In the first phase, interviewees were presented with the artifacts from the first interviews along with quotes from the two prior interviews (member checking) to stimulate reflections on the changes and processes over the timespan of the whole period of 20 months. Then, leaders were asked about general

observations about EMS at their school and particular moments of change in their relationship to colleagues, parents, or students, similar to the second phase of the educator interviews.

The first and the third round of interviews were carried out in person in the principal office and usually lasted 1.5 hours. The second round took place virtually and lasted one hour. After each interview, notes were taken by the interviewer took about the process of the interview. All interviews were recorded using an audio recorder and transcribed (see below).

4.4.2. Qualitative Interviews with Educators

The qualitative interview with educators (see Appendix C4) aimed at eliciting educators' reflections on the EMS project implementations, developments in faculty climate, and, foremost, on specific change moments in interactions with students and parents. Therefore, a protocol was developed which distinguished several interview phases targeting these aims. The first phase (see Figure 4) employed a semi-structured interview format with open questions about the educators' general experiences with the EMS project. This interview format is well-established and suitable for studying the participants' perceptions and opinions as well as enabling participants to explicate phenomena that they are not used to talking about or have little awareness of (Kallio et al. 2016). Semi-structured interviews utilize an interview guide which contains pre-defined questions – including key words and examples for follow-up questions which can be adapted to the interviewees' expressions. The order of the question can be flexibly adjusted to the flow of the conversation, while at the same time ensuring that all questions are addressed (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009).

The second interview phase aimed at a change moment evocation, i.e., a facilitated recall of the educators' memory of a specific interaction with a student or a parent, and in inquiry into the lived experience of this recalled interaction, as outlined above. This was inspired by the microphenomenological interview technique (Petitmengin 2006) which is devised to elicit detailed accounts of subjective experience. The author of this study completed a week-long training in the interview technique prior to the study.

The evocation phase of the interview was a directive process in the sense that questions were used to guide the participants' attention to their recall of their lived experience of a particular situation. Firstly, the process was explained to the interviewee and the interviewee was given time to recall a situation where he or she tried out or experienced something in the interaction with a child which she felt was new or meaningful. This question was chosen due to considerations that professional development requires translating an input into a domain of practice by means of experimentation (Clarke and Hollingsworth 2002). Subsequently, the interviewer used evocation instructions such as "take your time to go back to the memory of the situation," questions about the setting (who, where, what happened), and questions about sensory and affective layers of experience (e.g., "when you did x, what did you feel in your body?" "how was the mood / atmosphere?") supporting the interviewee's recall. Importantly, these questions did not suggest any content of memory. Alongside those questions, the interviewer repeated and summarized the descriptions provided by the

interviewee both to clarify understanding and help the recall. Often, repeating the statements by the interviewee would result in the interviewee's adding of another important aspect about the memory. Additionally, the interviewee was asked to compare this change moment to previous experiences and elucidate the aspects that mark this situation as new and different ("What was different this time?" "How was this in the past / in other instances?"). This procedure was repeated two or three times with different situations, inquiring both into shifts experienced as new and meaningful (positive), and secondly, into interactions that did not unfold as desired (negative).

Opening

Dialogue	
Non-directive: semi-structured	Sense-making about relational changes (meso)

Change moment evocation (10 min / moment)	
Directive: inquiring about a particular moment of relational change	Detailed account of the lived experience (micro)

Closing/de-brief
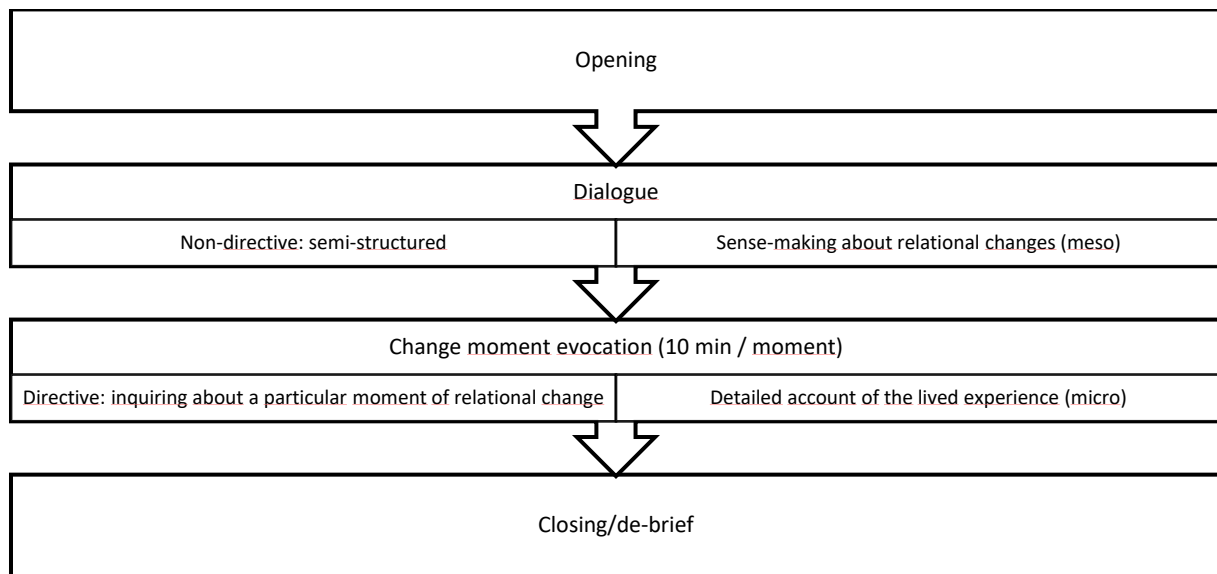
Figure 4: Interview process

Concluding, the educators were asked about general reflections on their school and the faculty climate during the timespan of the EMS training. The interviews with educators lasted 1 hour and were mostly conducted in-person at the schools during free hours, except for one virtual interview. After each interview, the interviewer took notes about the process of the interview.

This interview approach was chosen based on considerations that studying educators' relational competences requires a focus on specific interpersonal interaction processes (Aspelin 2023). During such processes, embodied intercorporeal facets of experience are crucial (Fuchs 2016b). These basic phenomenological tenets raise the question of how to explicate and verbalize the more tacit layers of experience.

According to Kolb (1984), the process of grasping experience takes place within a continuum of prehension with the two polarities of apprehension and comprehension. Apprehension bases on immediate and tangible phenomenal qualities and is associated with feeling and somatic awareness, while comprehension draws from conceptual interpretation and representation and is associated with thought. The evocation phase particularly aimed at a) focusing on a specific interaction and b) articulating the more apprehensive layers of experience. For similar reasons, sensory-based focus group interviews (Nielsen 2021) have

been proposed as a suitable data collection method using a meditative body-scan as a preparation for the recall of specific relational instances in educators' daily work. In fact, Nielsen and Peterson (2021) applied this method in their research on the precursor of the EMS project where it has proven to be effective in illuminating the educators' lived experiences of subtle relational processes. These interview techniques may be suitable here because the EMS project aims at cultivating interoceptive, somatic awareness with the goal of improving relational competence. Hence, the participants are familiar with these techniques.

Moreover, collecting data from teachers about their workplace performance is a matter of self-presentational biases (Kopcha and Sullivan 2007). In comparison to educators' general statements about their role in relation to students, the focus on specific interactions with students may help reduce this bias and approximate the educators' actual behavior more closely than espoused values and concepts.

It is worth mentioning that while this interview technique is innovative, it is not a standalone feature of this study. Similar methods for the study of specific instances during interactions have been introduced in psychotherapy research already half a century ago (e.g., Inter-personal Process Recall by Kagan et al 1969). Today, there is a growing interest within education research in the interactions between educators and students leading to new methods for data collection such as Nielsen's approach (2021) and analysis such as the microscopic relational analysis (Aspelin, 2022). By adopting this approach, the study contributes to this growing field.

4.4.3. Focus Group Interviews

Focus group interviews are widely used in educational and psychological research (Vaughn et al. 1996). This study employed semi-structured focus group interviews (Flick 2022) to address questions about the educators' experiences of the EMS modules, with practices in-between modules, and furthermore, regarding the lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the educators were asked about experiences of flow and creativity, i.e., about generative social fields. Focus group participants were invited to also build on each other and cross-communicate. The interviews lasted 45 minutes. After each interview, notes were taken by the interviewer about the process of the interview.

4.4.4. Conducting Interviews and Transcription

Interviews usually were conducted in a 1:1 conversation situation in a separate room at the schools, which created a quiet and undisturbed atmosphere for the conversation. In some interviews, the flow of the interview was briefly interrupted by telephone calls from the informant, however, it was always possible to resume the thread of the conversation in a concentrated manner. Prior to the beginning of each interview, the confidentiality of the conversational situation was emphasized, and participants were informed that they could end the interview at any time without any negative consequences for them. This supported the fact that the participants saw the interview as a research process which upheld its own quality standards, and that the interviewer could be seen as trustworthy.

The audio material was transcribed by an external transcriber in a way which enabled the reconstruction of the meaning of the utterances. To this end, emotional expression, intonation (LOUDness), long pauses, and other relevant sounds (sighing or knocking on the table) were added in brackets. In addition, the interviewer added in hindsight a description of gestures of the interviewees in brackets, whenever such gestures were taken up in the interview process and mentioned in the text. Dialects and accents were transferred into written German and not transcribed. All names mentioned in the text, such as colleagues or students, were changed.

The received transcripts were reviewed by the author of this study and checked for errors, including misunderstood and erroneously transcribed passages. This included double-checking with the audio file and returning the transcripts for improvement.

4.5. Data Analysis

Due to the multiple research aims, the analysis of the data adopted a flexible and integrative approach which enabled to scrutinize the data from multiple angles. Table 3 provides an overview of the research questions and the data collected for answering them.

Table 3: Research questions and data sources

Research Question	Data Source
1. How do the school educators and leaders from three diverse case-schools reflect on experiencing and enacting changes in their social fields due to EMS?	
1.1. Specific interactions with students and parents (micro-level)	7 educator interviews (10/21-03/22) Field shift reconstructions: Only selected passages from interview text Generic themes: Whole interview text and additional data from focus group interviews (08/20;N=4)
1.2. Developments within the school faculty (meso-level)	9 Repeated leader interviews + follow up (01/20+08/20,N=7) 7 educator interviews (10/21-03/22) Secondary data: 2 Educator focus group interviews (08/20;N=4)
2. Which are helping and hindering factors in the process of implementing the EMS whole-school approach?	9 Repeated leader interviews (3 timepoints: 01/20+08/20+,N=7) 7 educator interviews (10/21-03/22) Secondary data: 2 Educator focus group interviews (08/20;N=4)

4.5.1. Thematic Analysis

The study carried out a Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006). Thematic Analysis is a reliable method which is well-established within international qualitative research. The method was at the same time sufficiently flexible to be applied to the multiple aims of the study. Moreover, Thematic Analysis was consistent with the theoretical and epistemological underpinnings of an interpretivist paradigm, and more specifically, a constructivist epistemology in combination with phenomenology-based theory and method (Urcia 2021). Hence, a reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke 2021a) was carried out to analyze the data. Within this approach, a more phenomenologically oriented analysis and reconstruction of social field shifts was performed, which will be outlined later. To begin with, the general procedure will be presented.

The analysis involved both inductive and deductive elements, i.e., keeping the research questions in mind while also attending to novel aspects in the text, including both, as will be outlined below and, furthermore, semantic and latent coding. The analysis involved six steps suggested by Braun and Clarke (2021a):

1) data familiarization and writing familiarization notes

This step began by reviewing the transcripts for errors by listening to unclear sections of the audio file. Since the author of this study was the interviewer, this evoked also the memory of the interview situation and the gestures and tonality of the interviewee along with the researcher's own relational responsivities during these situations which were written up in notes. Furthermore, data familiarization entailed printing out the interview transcripts, reading and re-reading them several times, while marking some salient phrases or passages. Preliminary notes were taken.

2) systematic data coding

Data was coded using the coding function of the MAXQDA software. Here, both semantic and latent codes were ascribed, depending on the research question in mind. The full interview text was included in the coding process. Throughout the process, initial codes were adapted, further developed, collated with other codes, or discarded.

3) generating initial themes from coded and collated data

In this phase, based on engaging with the data in an intense way, initial themes which were most salient and meaningful both in the text and in response to the research questions, were created based on the codes. Here, sometimes codes were combined according to similarities or contrasts and other patterns of the codes.

4) developing and reviewing themes

This step was undertaken in collaboration with the co-supervisor of the PhD. Initial themes were discussed, and further explicated. Here, themes had to be distinctive enough and overlap between themes needed to be reduced. With an increasing familiarization of the various layers of meaning of the data, an important goal was that the themes in their entirety, the systems of themes, was a meaningful reconstruction of the data, rather than only single themes. Sometimes, this meant that codes had to be adjusted again, and be moved to other themes, or discarded.

5) refining, defining, and naming themes,

For each research question, a coherent "rule of theme formulation" was developed. For instance, the question on factors across educators' experiences of change moments on the micro-level, this rule was to formulate a theme starting with a quote from one of the interview, followed by a theme description to highlight the subjective experience. By contrast, for themes concerning the helping and hindering factors in the translation process between EMS program, school context, and faculty, themes were formulated as impersonal description of these factors.

6) with the last step being the writing of the results section.

In reality, the analysis did not follow these steps in a linear fashion, but in an iterative way. For instance, after discussing initial themes with the co-interpreter, codes had to be re-adjusted. The reflexive thematic analysis was carried out as an overall procedure of data analysis. Within this overall process, there were some specific procedures concerning these research questions:

The analysis concerning change moments within the social fields at a micro-level (Research Question 1.1.) was carried out across all educator interviews. To identify generic patterns across these change moments, the reconstructions of dyadic field shifts reviewed and compared to the educators' accounts of 'unsuccessful' interactions. Furthermore, the whole interview texts were included in the analysis, as well as focus group interviews as an additional source.

To analyze and construct themes concerning developments at a meso-level within the social fields of the school faculties (Research Question 1.2.) the repeated leader interviews were analyzed – comparing the statements regarding school climate over time – in combination with the interviews with educators from these schools and their statements concerning their faculty climate. Hence, the situated nature of these actors' perspectives as part of one school was considered in this process. Themes were generated by triangulating between these situated reflections by the educators and leaders from the same school about the quality of relationships at their schools (Patton 1999) identifying the contrasts and points of convergence among these perspectives.

The analysis concerning helping and hindering factors in the translation process of program elements into daily practice (Research Question 2) included the whole data set.

4.5.2. Phenomenological Thematic Analysis

An important task of this thesis was to study the way educators reflect on experiencing and enacting shifts during EMS in the social field between them and their students as well as the parents – and here, a focus on specific interactions has been suggested by the literature in the field (Aspelin & Jonson, Nielsen 2020). This also guided the data analysis based on the phenomenological conceptualization of the social field and its basic properties, intercorporeality, autonomy, and affordance, which was developed for this thesis (Pomeroy and Herrmann 2023). This involved a recursive process considering the theoretical properties of social fields and testing and developing ways to operationalize them, both adapting the model to the data and looking at the data from the model's lens. Thereby, a prototype framework guiding the analysis of interview data on dyadic social fields was developed. It hardly needs mentioning that this is but one possible approach for looking at the data. This approach was explicitly chosen with the aim of applying a social field's perspective which rests on the assumption of a prior embodied intertwinement of the actors in a social field. Seen from this angle, the educators' reflections on the moments of change in their relationships describe shifts in a social field, albeit only on a dyadic interpersonal or relational level.

The analysis framework (depicted in Figure 5) allowed the fine-grained reconstruction of micro-level field shifts, i.e., the moments of change in the diverse dyadic fields between various agents.
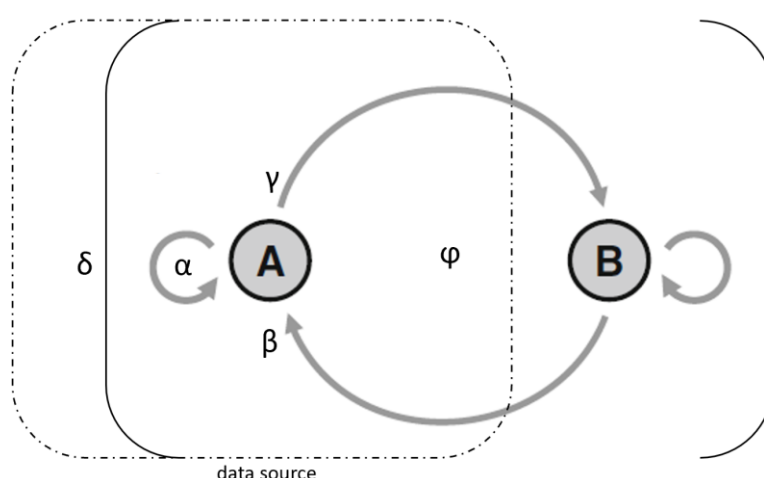
Figure 5: Components of a dyadic social field between person A and B. An interview analysis framework
α: Intrabodily, -affective, cognitive processes; β: Affordances: Impressions of other and perceived possibilities to interact; γ: Expressions: Verbal and nonverbal; φ: Field atmosphere and patterns and interactions;
δ: Cognitive framing of situational demands and scripts

The dotted ellipse around A indicates that the data source are the reflections of person A and the way she describes an interaction with B based on her personal memory including construction and reconstruction of the experience during the interview process. The model illustrates person A's involvement in simultaneously shaping and being shaped by a social field

during her interaction with B. It served as a guide for the analysis and reconstruction of the educators' lived experiences of shifts in the social fields between them and a student or a parent, based on an understanding of the field's basic properties, i.e., its intercorporeality, affordance, and autonomy. In Figure 5, intercorporeality is depicted by the two rounded arrows between A and B. Intercorporeality is largely a prereflective process, and even if its phenomena do get noticed, one may not be able to readily explicate them verbally. Therefore, intercorporeality will not be directly included in this analysis of interview data. However, the relational responsivities which form part of the intercorporeal cycle are an important aspect described by the interviewees as somatic or affective states during the interaction (position α in Figure 5). In addition, descriptions of altering one's expressions (position γ in Figure 5), tone of voice, rhythm, etc., indicate an exercised agency shaping of inter-bodily and -affective resonances. Furthermore, intercorporeal qualities may also be communicated non-verbally (Stern 2010), for instance, in emphases, pauses, bodily gestures, and vocal prosody.

Affordances refer to the impressions of the other, particularly, the perceived possibilities for interacting with the him or her. In the interview data they may appear both in explicit and latent ways and can be derived for instance from the way person A constructs person B based on both on the impressions of B (position β in the Figure 5) and A's responsivity and awareness thereof (position α in Figure 5). These constructions imply or invite ways in which A feels drawn to interact with B and discourage other ways. For instance, constructing B in terms of 'disturbing behaviors' may afford disciplining these behaviors. In addition to relational affordances, also situational affordances shape the interaction (position ε), including spatial arrangements or the educator's understanding of his or her professional role.

The field's autonomy refers to patterns of behavioral and affective couplings (position φ in Figure 5) which stabilize and tend to self-replicate in the field. Such patterns are based in the field's intercorporeality, and they are re-enacted by the members of the field following the respective affordances. Interviewees may describe such autonomous patterns as the 'normal' or 'habitual' way in which their interactions with someone unfold – in negative cases with undesired outcomes and despite attempts to interact differently. Their affordance may also be present as an expectation or anticipation. Furthermore, descriptions of the field's autonomy may also involve a (recalled) sense of the quality of the atmosphere among the interviewee and the others.

Field Shift Reconstruction

Guided by the analysis framework, the field shifts were reconstructed following an iterative six-step process depicted in Figure 6.

1) Select passages in the interview text where informants gave detailed descriptions of interactions (in particular, during the change moment evocation).
2) Differentiate between the way such an interaction would have normally unfolded (the habitual dyadic field), and the aspects of the interaction experienced as "new" (the field shift).
3) Reconstruct the affordances and the corresponding sequence of relevant turns in the interaction from the educator's viewpoint: Who did what in response to what? Which behaviors or utterances of the other "invited" a certain response?
4) Reconstruct the field autonomy in the form of patterns of interactions, i.e., mutually coupled behavior and affect (interpretive).
5) Alternate between micro-level of change moment and whole interview text. Discuss reconstruction with intercoder and return to the text.
6) Present reconstructions to the informants and adapt if needed (member-checking)

Figure 6: Field-shift reconstruction process

1) The first step was to select relevant passages in the interview data. Selection criteria were a) interviewees describe experiences of moments of desired and successful change in their interactions, b) interviewees explicitly attribute changes to EMS training, and c) the level of granularity of the descriptions.

Ad a) Since the goal was to reconstruct the experiences of shifts into more generative social fields, the selection criteria was to pick moments that according to the educators to some degree successful examples of implementing the EMS training. This is an explicit choice which necessarily also informs the interpretation of the results (see discussion). To contrast these moments of success, also moments of failure were part of the interview and informed the reconstruction of generic factors across moments of change.

Ad b) If interviewees spoke of relational changes without attributing them to the training, these changes were not selected, but were taken into consideration for the generic factors (Research Question 1.1.).

Ad c) To secure sufficient granularity for a reconstruction, field shift descriptions were included in the analysis if the sum of all relevant text passages exceeded a total word count of 2,000 words. Such passages were mostly tied to the evocation phase in the interviews intended to bring forth these descriptions, but sometimes also occurred in other occasions prior to or after this phase. For instance, the interviewees may have briefly mentioned a particular shift they experienced in relation to a student in the opening phase of the interview, and later returned to it during the evocation phase. In such a case, both passages in the text were included in the analysis.

2) The second step was to differentiate between the way the interviewee described his or her experience of the habitual dyadic field and the particular aspects of the moment of change in an interaction which are experienced as "new" or emergent. The focus here was to reconstruct the shift in the dyadic field. This differentiation rests mainly on interviewee's explicit comparisons between habitual and new aspects (e.g., *"it was something totally new"; "it in fact does not disturb me as much as before"; "usually, I would not have dared ..."*). The interviewee might also implicitly refer to this differentiation by expressing an anticipation, e.g., preparing oneself to meet the other's behaviors, or a surprise about a different impression or an effort to do things differently.

The following reconstruction steps 3 – 5 were then undertaken for both the habitual and the newly emergent aspects of the dyadic field and visualized in two columns, one for each version.

3) The third step was to identify the field's affordances by reconstructing the sequence of interaction and the corresponding affective and atmospheric descriptors in the text: Which feeling tone marks the educator's reflections and experiences – both with regard to the inner process (α) and the relational affordances (β)? How does the educator experience the atmosphere between herself and the student? Which behaviors or utterances of the other "invited" certain responses in the educator – and vice versa? How does the educator construe the "other" in that moment? In addition, this step also focused on how the educator's construal of her own professional role and values co-shaped the affordance (ε), which is an aspect more external to the particular situation, but probable more stable across interactions.

4) As a forth step, the field's autonomy was reconstructed in terms of patterns of interactions, i.e., mutually coupled behaviors and affect. Hence, based on descriptions provided by the interviewee, reciprocal and mutually stabilizing behaviors and affects were identified. For instance, an educator's expression (γ) of how she is affected by a child's behavior (telling a child *"it disturbs me")* along with the perception of the child's attempt to change his behavior (*"he took it seriously"*) indicates such a pattern. Moreover, interviewees may themselves articulate and describes such patterns (e.g., *"dragging in oppositive directions and no one is happy with it."*).

It is important to remind oneself of the dotted line in the Figure 5, namely, that the data source here is only one of the interactors. These patterns were built in an abductive way. What was represented here as the other's (the child's or parent's) behavior must crucially be understood as the child's behavior as *derived from the interviewee's perspective and recall of the experience*. The patterns were constructed assuming a meaningful and complementary coupling of behaviors, in either identical or complementary ways (Tomm et al. 2014).

The patterns were depicted as suggested by Tomm and colleagues (2014). The illustrations (see Figure 7) involve arched arrows implying the repetitive and self-reinforcing nature of a pattern. Moreover, the arrows indicate mutual and recurrent 'invitations' that should not be regarded as deterministic or causal connections. The text denotes the behaviors distinguished in the pattern, preferably using gerunds to articulate the process-character of these

behaviors. The slash in the center denotes the complementarity of the coupled behaviors. Patterns drawn vertically imply a significant power differential between the relevant actors. For example, a teacher's criticizing is depicted in the upper half of the figure, and a student's 'defending' in the lower half. See Figure 7 for illustrations of various patterns of interpersonal interactions.

pathologizing pattern   deteriorating pattern

wellness pattern   healing pattern
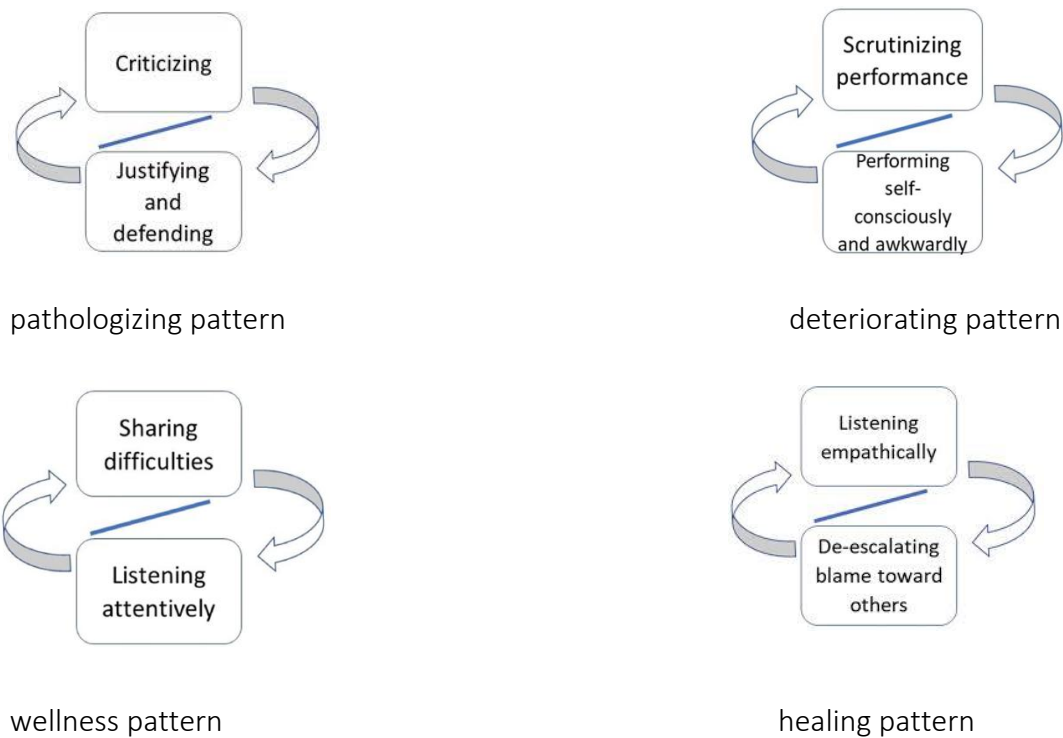
Figure 7: Patterns of interpersonal interactions (adapted from Chang et al. 2020)

5) The fifth step comprised an iterative process of discussing the reconstruction with another coder (PhD co-supervisor) to achieve intersubjective agreement, and to review the whole interview text in relation to the single change moment reconstruction as suggested for microscopic relational analysis (Aspelin 2023).

6) The sixth step was a post-hoc member-checking process. The reconstructions were presented to the informants, and informants were asked to revise them to ensure the reconstructions' validity. Furthermore, informants were asked to rate the sustainability of these field shifts. Specifically, informants were asked to rate verbally how likely they saw themselves responding to similar situations in the 'shifted' manner, on a scale ranging from 1 (never) to 10 (always) in comparison to the likelihood of such a response before the EMS training.

Importantly, these reconstructions do not claim to capture an overarching success of the EMS project. Much rather, they focus on successful moments in order to reconstruct the factors and conditions characterizing this success. The extent to which these moments of change are generalizable and relate to the overall implementation success needs to be carefully discussed (see discussion).

4.6. Epistemology

The focus point of this study is the relational sphere of school life and its changes during the EMS project. The goal is to attain knowledge about this relational sphere – the social field – through reconstructing the actors' reflections on experiencing and enacting changes in relational life at school. Therefore, this thesis conducts a qualitative study which is based on an interpretivist paradigm and a constructivist epistemology maintaining that knowledge generation is in itself a social process, and knowledge is always socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann 1966).

4.6.1. Constructionism and Phenomenology

Social constructionism (Berger and Luckmann 1966) posits that all knowledge, even the taken-for-granted common sense of everyday reality, is created in social interactions. The common knowledge of reality shared by people is reinforced by their interactions with one another. Hence, knowledge is the product of a constant process of social construction. Thus, rather than aiming at 'representing' objective facts, this study's goal is to reconstruct the interviewee's experiences of their interaction processes. Here, this study draws from phenomenology, both as a philosophical foundation for conceptualizing the social field (Merleau-Ponty 1964) and as a methodological approach (Petitmengin 2006) enabling a descriptive, interpretive, and inductive inquiry into the educators' lived experience (Urcia 2021). Inquiring about the educators' lived experience means to scrutinize both the way they construct their reflections on their experiences, as well as the very direct, first-person experiences – as Husserl's 'things themselves'. The goal of the interviews is not to represent objective facts, but to reconstruct subjective experiences embedded in social meaning structures. In searching for the insights about the way people experience and enact changes in their relationships, it is crucial to consider their subjective life world along with its relevant conditions (Flick 2022).

Viewing the research process from this perspective also conceives the interview process as a dialogical reconstruction shaping and shaped by a social field. Within this social field, previous interaction patterns may affect the knowledge produced in the interview. This is particularly relevant for the longitudinal and repeated interviews conducted with school leaders. Here, previous interviews most likely affected the leaders' subsequent reflections of the relationships at school.

4.6.2. Reflected Subjectivity

The tenets of social constructionism (Berger and Luckmann 1966) suggest that it is impossible to conceive the knowledge created during an interview as independent from the interviewer. Within the social field of the interview, the researcher's verbal and nonverbal expressions inevitably influence the interviewee's utterances. This highlights reflexivity as an important quality criterion in qualitative research (Flick 2013) necessitating the articulation of the researcher's own assumptions. While the researcher's subjectivity cannot be taken out of the

equation, it may be in fact an analytic resource (Braun and Clarke 2019; Braun and Clarke 2021a). Brinkmann and Kvale (2018) articulate this point:

> "Unrecognized bias may entirely invalidate the results of an interview inquiry. A recognized bias or subjective perspective may, however, come to highlight specific aspects of the phenomenon being investigated and bring new dimension forward, contributing to a multi-perspectival construction of knowledge." (pg. 86).

My core intention was to understand how educators can be supported in building relationships with students that sustain or support the well-being of both sides, where students can feel seen and safe so that they can learn and be equipped for the future challenges this generation will have to deal with. Thus, I assumed that it is possible to improve these relationships and that programs such as EMS can potentially bring about positive change. I participated in the EMS project in the dual roles of a facilitator and doctoral candidate. As a facilitator, I aimed at promoting the participants' relational competence while as a researcher, my goal was to generate new knowledge. Additionally, the training participants also encountered me in this dual role. On the one hand, I appeared as a researcher interested in knowledge. On the other hand, as a member of the EMS project who may be interested in proof of its effectiveness. Therefore, my basic attitude in this study assumes that my ways of interpreting and explaining the data are influenced by my views. Furthermore, the data may also be shaped by the interviewees' possible proclivity towards a positivity bias. Nevertheless, I have committed myself to scientific ethics, to approximate the interviewee's construction of reality as closely as possible, and to actively seek, acknowledge, and communicate data points that contradict my basic assumptions, with the fundamental goal of furthering the understanding and knowledge concerning the research aims and questions. Here, the dual involvement in the project was also advantageous, fostering the participants' trust as well as my own familiarity with the subject matter from a facilitator's perspective.

4.6.4. Ethical Considerations

During this study, ethical considerations on the protection of privacy and the prevention of harm to the study participants played an important role. For example, the schools may be identifiable through the EMS project website. Therefore, any socio-demographic data about the interview participants was only reported for the whole sample, preventing the identification of the interview participants.

4.7. Adaptations due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The research and the intervention processes were affected by the unexpected onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (Herrmann, Nielsen, & Aguilar Raab 2021). Alongside developing the research aims and methodology as a normal part of any research project, the COVID-19 pandemic afforded the following adaptations:

a) Conducting interviews to explore how the educators and leaders experience the effects of the pandemic on the interpersonal relationships at school.

b) Discarding the initially planned student interviews and classroom observations because the hygienic measures at the schools prevented data collection in classrooms and duration of these measures was uncertain at the moment. A second reason was that developing sufficient trust and rapport with the students turned out to require more time and effort than initially expected and the quality of initial data was insufficient for the research aims.

c) Carrying out interviews partly via zoom instead of in-person meetings, depending on the requirements of the pandemic.

d) Adapting the original, pre-pandemic design strategy which was to use the data from a first round of focus groups interviews to identify central themes concerning experienced changes, and to then scrutinize these types of changes using the microphenomenological interview technique in a second data collection round. Due to impediments caused by the pandemic, e.g., time constrictions such as a delay in the intervention and the first interview round, as well as difficulties in recruiting interview participants, the design had to be changed and adapted.

e) Adapting the research questions and aims, which had originally placed more emphasis on the meso-level changes during EMS as a whole school approach. The severe disruptions experienced by the school community during the pandemic hampered reflections on change impulses of EMS. Hence, more emphasis was placed on examining micro-level changes. Moreover, the disruptions also presented the opportunity to investigate their impact on the relationships at school, leading to a dedicated publication (Herrmann et al. 2021).

5. Results

5.1. Sample

The sample of interviewed educators consisted of seven educators (six female, one male), with a mean age of 49.25 years (range: from 44 – 57 years). They had an average of 14.9 years of experience in their profession (range: 6 – 26 years) which included four teachers, two childcare workers, and one special education teacher. Additionally, seven school leaders, including principals, and co-principals as well as one after-school leader, were interviewed. Note that to ensure data protection, no further details about the school leaders will be revealed.

In terms of training dosage, five educators had completed all six modules, one missed one and another missed two modules of the EMS program.

5.2. Social Field Shifts (Micro-Level)

The interviewees elucidated several instances where they experienced shifts in the dyadic field between them and their students, the parents, as well as within the social field of the whole class. These shifts unfolded in response to typical challenges for educators in their daily work, namely, students perceived to disturb the lesson, students with difficult emotions, restlessness in the classroom, and demanding meetings with parents. The following examples will be organized based on these challenges. For each of these challenging relational affordances, two to three field shift reconstructions will be presented. It is worth mentioning that this was no pre-conceived categorization but one that emerged from the data set.

Each example begins with describing the 'habitual' social field, i.e., the way such an interaction would have habitually unfolded. This is based on how interviewees elucidated what it would have normally been like for them in the past, what they did and felt during past interactions with the same person, or in similar situations, including the typical patterns of interactions and interaffectivity. Subsequently, the shifts educators experienced in the dyadic field will be remodeled, again both in terms of affordances and autonomy. Details and further original quotes which are the basis of each field shift reconstruction are provided in Appendix A.

5.2.1. Perceived Challenge: Student Disturb Lesson (Field Shifts A, B, and C)

In these examples, the educators spoke about experiencing and enacting changes in the social field between them and a student in the classroom which they perceived to be disturbing the lesson, involving shifts from disciplining the other to expressing own boundaries (Example A), from taking responsibility instead of leaving it up to the child (Example B), and from criticizing the child's behavior to acknowledging the underlying motivation (Example C).

Example A: From Disciplining the Other to Expressing Oneself

Affordance of the Habitual Social Field

The main affordance in this sequence of interactions concerned a student's chatting and noise during class. Linda who is the class teacher experienced the student's behavior as a *"disturbance"* which afforded being corrected and stopped by the teacher. Habitually, this correction came in the form of disciplining the student. The teacher's responsivity to the affordance was shaped by her interpretation of her professional role. She saw it as her primary task to change the boy's behavior. Furthermore, framing the situation in this way also afforded proving her own value as a teacher based on her success in altering the child's behavior. Understandably, this evoked a felt responsivity of pressure. The social field was marked by an attempt to subordinate to the pedagogical standard which afforded pressuring both herself (performing well as an educator) and the child (limiting his noisy expressions). The fact that the boy continued his behavior evoked a *"feeling of having failed in educating him."* Furthermore, she took his disturbances personal, attributing negative intentions to him, feeling *"personally attacked"* by him. The responsivity of taking his behavior personal seems to correlate to the feeling of failure and a more generally *"attacked"* self-esteem. Hence, the

situation was marked by a felt subtle dependency on the child and an affective enmeshment, where one's own difficult feelings contribute to a tendency to blame the other. This paints a picture of the dyadic field's texture as contracted, tense, marked by anger, vigilance – and *"no one is happy with it."* The perceived degrees of freedom in terms of how this could be improved were quite narrow, since, according to the teacher's perspective, it was only the boy who in changing his behavior would be able to provide a relief for the teacher's felt pressure and challenged self-esteem.

Autonomy of the Habitual Social Field: Patterns of Interaction

Understandably, this tense affordance invited Linda to *"drag"* the student to change his behavior – so that the teaching could happen uninterruptedly, and she could sustain her pedagogical self-esteem. On a behavioral level, it invited the *"correcting"* or *"disciplining"* the boy in accordance with the pedagogical standards, which set in motion a seemingly inevitable interaction loop of struggling with each other, with limited possibilities for both parties to appear in the relationship as something else than adversarial. Consequently, Linda experienced in her relationship with the student a repetitive negative pattern which she described as *"dragging in opposite directions and no one is happy with it."* The pattern was constituted by a coupling of the educator's disciplining and the child's resisting which took the form of his lack of changing his behavior. In addition, an inter-affective pattern of mutually rejecting each other had been established – attributing negative intentions to the other, feeling attacked by the other, and reciprocating the perceived attack.

In sum, the social field continuously re-created a pattern of disciplining and resisting, taking a toll on the affective well-being of both parties. This observable situation was accompanied by a subtle dependency in which the child's behavior impacted on the teacher's self-esteem.

Shifts in Field Affordance

Linda's account of the change moment between her and the student illustrated a shift in the social field on many levels: in how she construed the child *("he has not changed but my view on him has changed")* and her own professional role, as well as in the relational responsivity she experienced. Furthermore, in how she expressed herself to the child and in the overall interpersonal pattern which was enacted between them. As Linda elucidated, a central shift happened during an EMS module which preceded the change between her and the boy:

> *"It was something totally new, … a real Aha experience … which helped me a lot … to experience that I do not have to change myself nor the child. But that I have to change this relationship. And this took a lot of pressure of and opened a whole new set of possibilities."*

In the situation with the boy, the affordance of the boy's behavior shifted, inviting less of negative affective charge in her responsivity *("It in fact does not disturb me as much as before")* but rather feelings of relief and relaxation. Instead of taking the boy's behavior personal and making her professional self-esteem depend on his ability to behave according to the pedagogical standard, Linda regarded it as a personal expression of who he is and his current abilities *("I leaned to have a different view on it. It's not his fault. He is the way he is")*.

Thus, she felt more acceptance both for the boy and for herself with their respective personal needs, and the quality of her attention shifted from vigilance to a more relaxed awareness of her own sensations and his expressions.

Linda's interpretation of her own professional role shifted in a way that the pedagogical standard and her teacher habitus were no longer the only orientation available to her. Instead, she balanced her pedagogical task-orientation with a relational awareness which enabled her to respond to the situational affordances more flexibly. Instead of having to alter the boy's behavior directly, she oriented herself towards maintaining or improving her relationship to him, *without* suspending her pedagogical goals *("It does not mean that he should not adapt to the rules, but I can use the rules more flexibly with him.")*. Hence, she conceived of the problem as originating *between* her willingness and ability to tolerate noise and the boy's ability to be still, and not entirely from within the boy, and adapted her pedagogical standard to the boy's perceived abilities, which relaxed her and allowed her to sustain a greater sense of self-esteem and personal coherence which previously had been hampered by a sense of pedagogical failure. Thus, the Linda's relational responsivity is marked by greater centeredness rather than irritability.

In addition, Linda was more aware of her own responsivity, and deliberately practiced brief mindfulness of her somatic sensations and breathing, which contributed to her self-regulation. By self-regulating her responsivity and thereby responding to what she needed in the situation, Linda's well-being depended less on what the boy did, and she was more centered and calm in the face of the boy's behaviors.

Overall, the Linda's accounts paint the picture of a dyadic field marked by greater acceptance, intra- and interpersonal coherence, integration of differences *("good tension"),* and flexibility.

Shifts in Field Autonomy: Emergent Patterns of Interaction
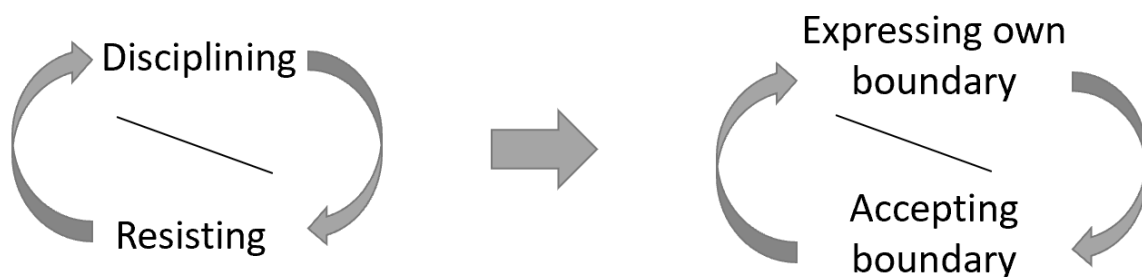
Figure 8: Field shift from stickily oppositional to flexibly approving

Figure 8 illustrates that the previous interaction cycle (left) shifted to a new version (right). It needs to be highlighted that the child's experience of this cycle may have been different. However, their actions and expressions were part of a cycle experienced by the teacher. As previously mentioned, constructing these patterns of interactions posits a complementarity between teacher behavior, in this case characterized as 'disciplining', and child behavior, which is constructed here as 'resisting'. Depicting an interaction cycle in an asymmetric relationship, the rule is to position the behavior of the more powerful interactor in the upper half of the graph. Hence, in the following illustrations, teacher behavior is depicted above,

child behavior below. The dash between both behaviors represents their complementarity and the arrows their mutual coupling.

The behavior of the boy still afforded a response, because it continued to disturb Linda's concentration and work – albeit less intensely. Yet, this affordance was experienced and acted on by Linda in a very different way. Previously, she disciplined the boy based on the pedagogical rules and – also due to the implications for her self-esteem – she expressed herself in an angry and loud manner. Instead, she now informed the boy early on that at some point it will be too much for her, and when that point is reached, she acted on this, telling him to stop. This way, Linda's expression became a way of acting on her responsivity – the bodily sensations, feelings, thoughts, related to 'being disturbed' – and taking responsibility for her needs in the situation, which was reflected in using the word "I" (*"[In the past,] I told him 'stop it now!' But it does not help. Meanwhile, I … don't focus on him, but I say: 'It is disturbing me. Now I am disturbed.'"* "Now you have to stop it.") Thus, the Linda's expressions invited in the student a possibility to learn about how his actions affected her and, furthermore, to collaborate with her in solving this issue between them. This was facilitated by the centered and accepting quality of her expressions.

Rejecting – Rejecting → Accepting – Accepting
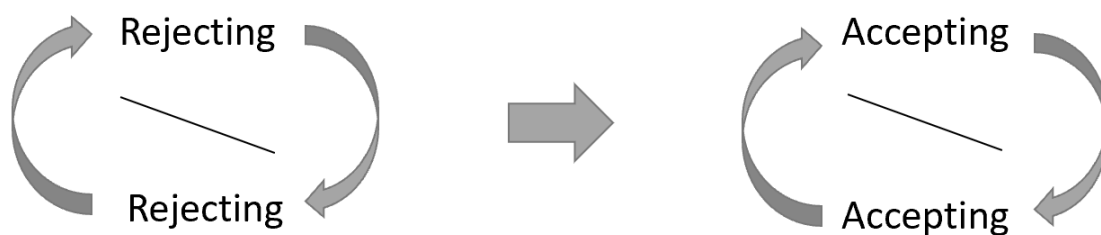
Figure 9: Field shift from rejecting to accepting

Furthermore, Linda's awareness was open to the child and how he reacted to her rather than being absorbed by 'the disturbance'. Linda experienced the student as responsive to her request *("He takes me seriously. He notices …: 'I have to restrain myself'."),* reciprocating her acceptance towards him. Feeling that he accepts her countered her previous mentalizing which was marked by attributing negative intentions to him. Hence, a new pattern of mutual acceptance emerged – feeling accepted by the other and accepting the other. This acceptance involved a degree of flexibility and positive tension. It did not mean that one must agree, but that one can live better with the differences *("flexibly approaching and distancing.")*

The disciplining shifted towards 'mirroring' how the student affects the teacher, and to inviting the student to collaborate in solving this problem between them. The boy responded in an accepting manner and with a greater willingness to adjust his behavior, and hence transformed the interpersonal pattern into a more wholesome version. The affective atmosphere was marked by mutual acceptance, both inwardly, as a self-acceptance of the educator (rather than inner pressure), and outwardly, which on the boy's side might invite feeling accepted by the educator and reciprocating this acceptance towards her and her boundaries, rules, and needs during class.

Example B: Taking Responsibility Instead of Leaving it up to the Child

Affordance of the Habitual Social Field

In this situation, a student's disturbing behaviors during class *("not doing what he should do,"* e.g., walking around in the classroom while the rule was to stay at his place) evoked in Julia the felt bodily responsivity of stress and agitation as well as a vigilance. In addition, these were the initial indicators of an anxiously anticipated struggle with the boy and signs of her failure of creating a positive relationship with the student *("he is the type of child where I notice: I simply fail in making contact to him").*

The affordance and responsivity evoked an impulsive and immediate reaction, *"taken by her own affect"* (German: *"im Affekt"*) without self-regulating her stress and agitation. Julia portrayed the quality of her actions in the situation as quick, restless, and agitated *("reacting, reacting, reacting"; "always ready, jumping on it immediately").* She walked up to the student trying to move him to his chair, asking him one of her habitual questions from her *"bag of tricks"*: *"What do you need now to become calmer? It must become quiet now. Would x, y, z help you to become calm?"* The content of these questions was intending to stimulate the student's willingness and capacity to self-regulate, become calm and adapt to the rules. However, this was contrasted by the educator's own agitated responsivity – i.e., her own lack of self-regulation – which the student may have sensed from her non-verbal expressions.

Autonomy of the Habitual Social Field: Patterns of Interaction

The contrast between Julia's verbal and non-verbal expressions may have left the boy with an incoherent impression. Julia requested from the boy, in an implicit manner, to calm down and be still, while she herself was nervously upset. Furthermore, she made him responsible for changing the situation for both of them *("I always handed it over to him, this [claps hands] 'change something now'!").* The boy's reaction was not a collaborative one, thereby confirming the educator's sense of *"not getting into contact"* and reinforcing their habitual interpersonal pattern. Overall, the dyadic field involved an absence of a felt connection along with feelings of agitation.

Shift in Field Affordance

The perceived shifts mainly concerned the situation's affordances, the educator's self-regulation and her expression to the student, as well as the student's response. Meeting the student's class, Julia intended to apply what she learned in the recent EMS module. Hence, the situational affordance shifted towards a felt possibility to enact change and along with that, her responsivity shifted. The high somatic arousal when working with this class made a different impression on her. Instead of stress and agitation she framed it as excitement, instead of another repetition of the habitual failure of contact she anticipated something new with unknown results: *"I was not stressed as usual. In this case it was excitement: Now the situation is up ahead where EMS module 4 can prove its value. Now I test it out."* When the

boy was walking through the classroom *(once again "not doing what he should do")*, the educator still felt a high arousal. Due to her intention to act differently, she suspended her impulse of addressing the boy immediately and instead first consciously centered herself by regulating her own arousal and irritation: While handing out papers to the class, the teacher took a couple of minutes of time during which she calmed herself down using inner speech assessing the situation *("the boy was actually not at risk")*, deliberately focusing on her somatic awareness of her breathing *("OK, breathe in, breathe out")*. Furthermore, she inwardly prepared herself to speak with the boy with the intention of "owning" her irritation and taking responsibility for her needs in this situation *("I thought: Okay, this [referring to her irritation] is mine. I keep it with me. But I will make it really clear what I need here and now.")*. Having intentionally regulated and prepared herself in such a way, she directly approached the boy: *"You have noticed that I try to calm things down here. I can't do it like this. I simply need you to be calm." "Go to your place."*

Previously, Julia approached the student with questions about how he could calm down – while being upset herself. Now, she briefly voiced her own struggle and her intention to him, thereby "owning" her difficulties *("I can't do it like this"* instead of *"it has to be calm")* and taking leadership in the situation by expressing a clear request instead of requiring from him to come up with a solution. In addition, likely her own self-regulation and centeredness – as a way of taking responsibility for herself – has expressed itself non-verbally, shifting the field's intercorporeality. Hence, there was more coherence between what she said and what her body conveyed. In centering herself and regulating her arousal, Julia herself embodied and modeled what she would like to see in the boy – and what she had previously been asking without practicing. Furthermore, she took on leadership instead of leaving it up to the boy to change something by owning and clearly expressing what she wanted from him.

As a response, the boy nodded, uttered his agreement *("Well, okay")*, and went to his place. This invited in the educator the arising of positive affect (feeling *"like a bunch of flowers," "a bubbly feeling of bliss"*), since it signaled to her that "*he could accept this.*" His responsiveness contrasted their previous difficult encounters during which she had been struggling *("not getting into contact")*. Instead, she now thought *"Okay, this was the contact I never had before."* Reflecting on why the boy could respond to her request in such a way, the teacher suspects that he felt relief, since now it was the teacher who took the responsibility for the situation.

Shift in Field Autonomy: Emergent Patterns of Interaction
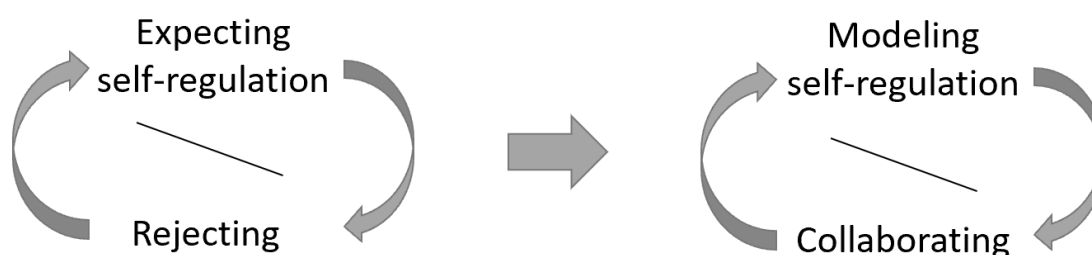
Figure 10: Field shift from confused to coherent

Previously, the teacher's attempts to coordinate with the student failed. The student did not fulfill her expectations by self-regulating or collaborating like the others, but he rejected her approach. When the teacher shifted from expecting from him to change, towards modeling herself the kind of self-regulation or self-control she wanted from him, he suddenly began to collaborate. A new pattern of interaction emerged coupling the teacher's modeling of self-regulation and her clearer request with the student's collaborating, increasing their coherence within an affective atmosphere of growing contact.

Example C: From Criticizing Behavior to Acknowledging Motivation

In this example, a boy frequently commented on various occasions during the class, like student's mistakes or deviations from routines etc. ("Kevin [name changed] always has something to say.") His comments afforded being criticized, evoking a feeling of time pressure in Maria. During EMS, she began to examine her criticism of the student ("*I realized that what I say is really unfavorable.*"), assuming that being constantly criticized may be hurtful. Feeling sorry, Maria reflected that the time pressure was her issue, not his:

> *"Yes, because I feel sorry for him, yes. […] Because I'm just thinking, you're absolutely right, but I just have a problem with time and that's not your problem (laughs)."* (Maria, Pos. 206)

Consequently, the boy's disruptions afforded being responded to in a manner that does not cause him to feel wrong or rejected. Maria experimented with new ways of responding to his disruptions. For example, instead of calling him a *"time robber,"* she acknowledged the positive intentions behind his comments by thanking him briefly.
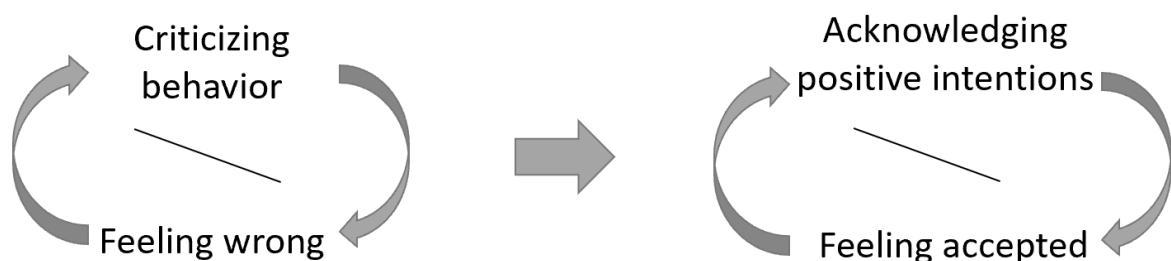
Figure 11: Field shift from critical to appreciative

5.2.2. Perceived Challenge: Student's Difficult Emotion or Special Need (Field Shifts D, E, and F)

The following three examples concern experienced shifts in the dyadic field between the educators and individual students who expressed distress or showed special needs. The described changes in the social field involve shifts from task-orientation to supporting emotion regulation (Example D), from insisting on rules to showing personal care (Example E), and from ignoring to accepting a relational invitation (Example F).

Example D: From Task-Orientation to Supporting Emotion Regulation

Affordance of the Habitual Social Field

The initial affordance inviting this sequence of interaction during a special education class concerned a boy's struggle with an exercise. While the other students were working in a *"calm atmosphere,"* one boy signaled his desperation. His feelings afforded helping him (*"get him out of this situation." "I always want to find a quick fix"*), evoking in Franziska a responsivity of empathic distress (*"difficult to bear"*). The lesson context normally afforded a focused task-orientation manifesting in the group's calm and concentration. Congruent with this fixated task-orientation, Franziska attributed the boy's desperation primarily to his struggle with the exercise, besides more general reasons like his difficult family background. Moreover, she related to herself from a demanding stance, with a sense that her range of possible actions was rather limited (*"I was demanding from myself: I must solve this here in this space, given the little number of kids I have in this class. I was fixed somehow."*). Franziska acted on this affordance, lowering the pressure on the boy by releasing him from the task (*"I want to help everyone, and of course I don't succeed by adding more pressure"*), telling him he did not need to write anything. She portrayed the tone and quality of her actions as quick, high-tempo, and *"treating him like the others,"* calling this strategy a *"quick fix."* Regarding Franziska's framing of her own professional role and habitus, she was adhering to the assumption that the situation did not require from her to attune to the student individually, since the special-ed class setting was already *"sufficiently individualized."*

The field's autonomy involved a pattern of interaction which was successful in reducing the boy's desperation as a function of lowering the academic task, while maintaining the corresponding task-oriented habitus.

Shift in Field Affordance

The perceived shifts mainly concerned the situational affordance, Franziska's relational awareness along with her way of actively attuning to the student, and her professional goals with an increased motivation to be *"closer to the children"* and to work in a *"more individualized"* manner.

The student's desperation afforded enacting change by applying learnings from the EMS training. This transformational affordance involved a basic sense of empowerment and creativity to leave habitual ways of operating (*"do it differently than usual" Pos 58; "Look what your possibilities are."*) For example, Franziska noticed her momentary and habitual fast-paced task-orientation and felt that it was not suitable to help the boy with his feelings (co-regulating him). (*"To feel for myself: It is too fast. And allow this stop and get in touch with the child."* Pos. 72). More specifically, attuning to the boy afforded suspending her habitual pace, slowing down, and taking time (*"Allowing the time for him and for myself, to give enough time to feel into this."* Pos. 60). Importantly, her *"allowing"* concerned not only the student, but also herself. The allowing simultaneously included self and other. Her awareness opened up, releasing its fixation on the task and the class as one entity (*"treating him like the others"*),

becoming receptive and relationally attuned to herself and the child in the here-and-now *("feeling my way")*. This open awareness enabled a learning process, seeking to meet the boy's need in a sequence of multiple interaction turns. Franziska mentalized about his needs in the situation ("he needs more relief") and experimented with her options of helping him. Furthermore, she remained responsive to the students' expressions in the moment and adapted her expressions accordingly. For example, she shifted from asking him general questions *("'Is it that you can't do it now?'")* to verbalizing her observation and naming his feelings *("'Look, I notice you can't do this. Right?' And he replied 'hm'. 'Do you need a break?' 'Hmm.')*. As a further Example Hor the above-mentioned creativity, novel action possibilities emerged which were supportive for the boy's self-regulation: Breaking out of the imagined limitation of being confined to the classroom, Franziska suddenly got the idea that the student could take a break outside the classroom *("AAH, I can also try it THIS way.")*. She handed the boy a visual timer and told him to return when the time was off and when he was feeling better.

Furthermore, Franziska experienced that this interaction shifted the texture of the social field. She described the arising sense of connection and warmth in the social field between her and the student *("a warm bond", "Better access to the student")*. Feeling safe to show to this teacher when he cannot perform, the student learned a new way of regulating his distress and keeping his balance – which he did not show in other settings: *"In the SUBSEQUENT lessons he was able to signal to ME: 'I can't do it now.' With the other [teachers] he sits under the table, but with me he doesn't do this."*

Shift in Field Autonomy: Emergent Patterns of Interactions
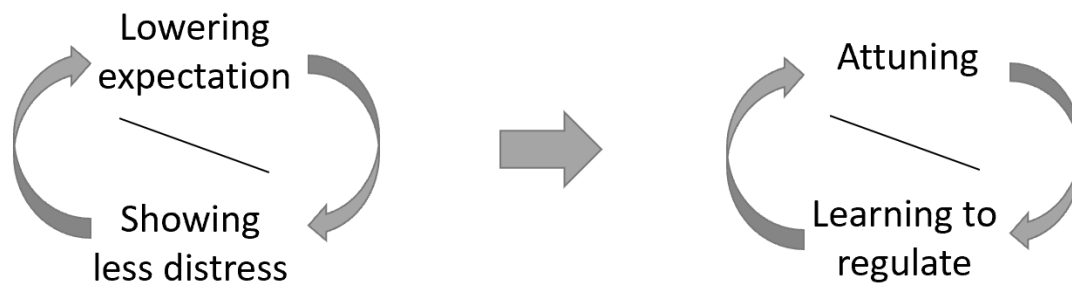
Figure 12: Field shift from task-fixated to co-regulating

The initial interaction cycle is framed by an unbroken task-orientation. The boy's feelings are dealt with by 'down-regulating' expectations regarding his performance in the task. This is altered in the new interaction cycle. Here, the boy appears as a person with differentiated needs, and he affords being attuned to. The new cycle couples the teacher's attuning and emotional support with the student's feeling understood and learning to self-regulate. Seeing the student go along with her suggestions and successfully self-regulate, even to the point of finishing his initial task, Franziska felt the arising of positive affect and an increased relational self-efficacy or sense of *"success."* Notably, in contrast to the previous coupling of 'lowering expectation' with 'signaling less distress', the emergent pattern did not compromise the

student's academic performance. Instead, it enhanced his social emotional learning by supporting him in regulating his feelings.

Example E: From Insisting on Rules to Showing Personal Care

This field shift concerns Jill's relationship to a student from a very difficult family background (*"extremely precarious situation"* Jill, Pos 44). Jill underscores that the boy is at risk (*"school is the safest place he has"* (Pos 46)), getting involved in fights with other children. Furthermore, the student cannot fulfill many of his school duties:

> *"He can't always come to school at all because his mom needs something from him. Um/ he can't bring in papers. He can't do homework. All sorts of things."* (Jill, Pos. 44)

Affordance of the Habitual Social Field

Habitually, his failure of fulfilling such duties afforded being corrected by insisting on the rules. Jill described her responsivities as narrow focus on the rules using the expression *"mich festbeißen"* that literally translates as *"biting myself into it."* Feeling angry about not getting what she ought, the field was marked by mutual frustration and a coercive and contracted atmosphere. From time to time, the situation was described to escalate further, exacerbating the negative affectivity through strategies like *"threatening"* the child with punishments such as informing their parents (Jill, Pos. 44).

Shift in Field Affordance

The shift in affordance widened the perspective on these issues, by taking into account the life circumstances of the boy. Seeing these issues as manifestations of the difficult situation of the boy (*"It's not his fault" "completely understandable"*), they afforded being accepted (*"I can't control those things, and I could get hung up on them. But I'm just letting them go."*). It is worth mentioning that Jill did not let go of her professional goals on behalf of the student, but fathomed whether insisting leads to success or damages the relationship. Her process of striking a new balance is illustrated in the two following quotes:

> *"And I have, so to speak, taken a step back in the sense that I said: Okay, I can't change it, so (laughs) I love it. And that doesn't change the precarious situation. But I believe it's still the best I can achieve."* (Jill, Pos. 44)

> *"it's not like I have no more wishes or expectations because of that but if they're associated with such high pressure, they don't benefit me or the child."* (Jill, Pos. 222-223)

Crucially, this shift entailed prioritizing the relationship to the boy over the school duties.

Shift in Field Autonomy: Emergent Patterns of Interaction
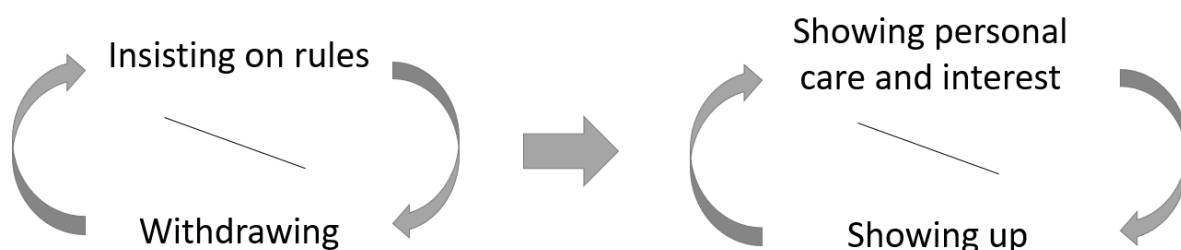
Figure 13: Field shift from coercive to caring

The field quality improved by showing personal genuine interest in the boy instead of insisting on rules, also fostering the boy's school attendance: *"I'm just letting them [his unfulfilled duties] go and the more I let go, the more he comes to school willingly."* The field got infused over time with a degree of trust. Jill provided the example of a situation when the student showed up late at a special support class, and instead of participating in the lesson, he warded her off. Asking whether he was angry, the boy did not answer, and so Jill decided to wait. Later the same day, the boy approached Jill saying,*"'It's because of you that I was not allowed to play football.'"* Jill saw this as his attempt to repair their connection *("I actually appreciated in that moment that he addressed it and that it was just out in the open."* Jill, Pos. 113), feeling at *"eye-level"* with him. In her response, Jill verbalized his feelings, acknowledging on the one hand his wish to play football. On the other hand, Jill also expressed her own interest in his learning and attendance and proposed a new agreement accounting for the motives of them both. The boy signaled acceptance. Hence, the situation illustrates the integrative and personal quality of their social field, dissolving conflict through 'healing' interaction cycles, and potentially serving as an existential support for the child in coping with his difficult life situation.

Example F: From ignoring to accepting a relational invitation and building a trusting bond

In another example of a shift in relation to a child with special needs, the Linda realized during the EMS training that her student was trying to get in contact with her by asking her for help. The affordance of the student's behavior – asking for help with closing his zipper – shifted dramatically. Initially, the student's persistent *"inabilities"* evoked in her a frustrated relational responsivity of having failed as an educator. Eventually, the frustration solidified as the conviction that she was unable to get in touch with him and she began to ignore the child. Hence, the students' asking for contact by pursuing the teacher was coupled with the teacher's ignoring and withdrawing from him.

Her insight during EMS suggested considering that the student may be seeking contact with her. Consequently, the same student behavior now afforded establishing a relationship with him.
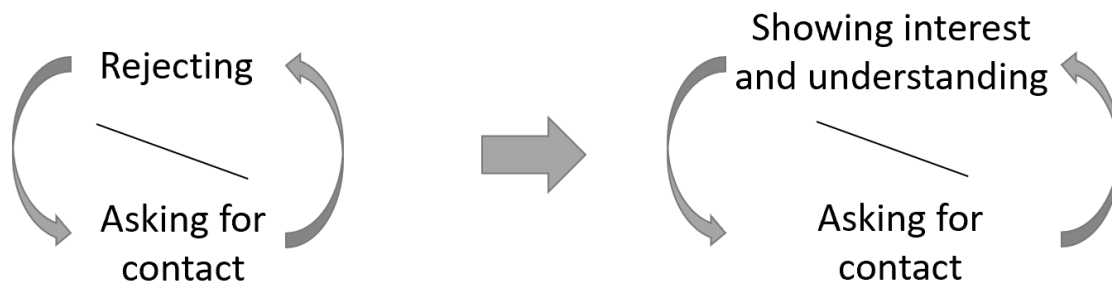
Figure 14: Field shift from repellent to responsive

The new perception invited a new cycle of interactions – the teacher's friendly responding to the student's invitation for contact, the student's opening up in response to the teacher's friendliness. Repeating this cycle over the course of several weeks shifted the social field's texture, growing a sense of *"trust"* and connectedness between the two. It developed *"acceptance"* of the student, a more *"accurate perception",* and resulted in the teacher's sense that *"through this connection, I am able to transmit much more to him."* The shift also affected the pedagogical strategy by acknowledging the student's developmental phase and emphasizing the student's potentials, rather than his limitations. In return, the student's academic achievements grew.

5.2.3. Perceived Challenge: Restless Classroom (Field Shifts G and H)

These two examples concern the social field within the classroom and illustrate changes experienced by the educators in their response to perceived restlessness in the whole class, comprising shifts from stress-contagion to self-regulation (Example G) and from rigidity to flexibility and focus (Example H).

Example G: From Stress-Contagion to Self-Regulation

Affordance of the Habitual Social Field

The main affordance during this stand-in class concerned the students' restlessness and their difficulties in following the lesson's content, along with Rolf having a stressful start of the day. This invited in Rolf a responsivity in the form of bodily tensions, affective irritability, along with a reduced awareness and receptivity for the students' affective and mental state. Congruently, Rolf took the class's restlessness personal, attributing negative intentions to them (*"they do not want to listen to me"*). Furthermore, the educator's expressions to the class were loud and fast (a *"rough tone"*) and he accused the class of ruining his day. The class in return got more silent, but also very tense.

Autonomy of the Habitual Social Field

The interactions between teacher and class were antagonistic. The teacher's disciplining outburst was coupled with the class's reducing their restlessness and noise by tensing up. This

was partly effective in terms of classroom management, but as a side effect created an affective atmosphere in the social field marked by anger and tension with a tendency to escalate. Habitually, such irritability could propagate beyond the classroom so that during breaks, too, Rolf had the tendency to readily reciprocate any perceived attack from other students or colleagues.

Shift in Field Affordance

The social field shift concerned the educator's self-regulation and relational awareness, and the resulting atmosphere in the class. During a break, Rolf became aware of his agitated responsivity in the form of bodily tension – espousing in the interview that the EMS training contributed to this increased awareness. He actively regulated his own somatic tension by sensing his body more fully, grounding himself, and *"really taking a breath."* Furthermore, Rolf realized that during the earlier lesson, his expectations for the class had been too high. After the break, when the lesson continued, he expressed this acceptance to the class: *"For you it [the exercise] seems to be more difficult than we had expected, but that is not a big deal."* (Pos. 187). Instead of taking the students' restlessness and their difficulties with the learning content personal, he met them with acceptance (saying to himself "It is the way is" (Pos. 182)). In return, the atmosphere in the class lit up and the students did not chatter as loud as before.

Shift in Field Autonomy: Emergent Patterns of Interaction
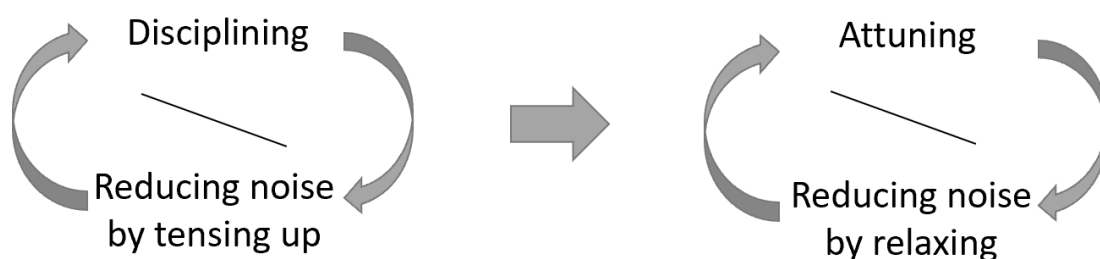
Figure 15: Field shift from tension to regulation

Initially, the disciplining cycle between Rolf and the class resulted in a high level of tension. Attuning to the class' momentary level of performance and attention and self-regulating his irritation contributed to a different pattern of interaction. This new cycle was equally effective in reducing noise in the class, but it involved mutual collaboration and facilitated an affective atmosphere of greater ease and well-being.

Example H: From Rigidity and Restlessness to Flexibility and Focus

In another example, the main affordance concerned the class's restlessness. Hanna saw this as a response to the disruption of their daily routine due to chaotic external circumstances. Habitually, this situation would have afforded *"rigidly holding on"* to her plan with a sense of

having to push through, coupled with the class's restlessness. The resulting pattern of stress contagion was experienced as a *"spiral."*
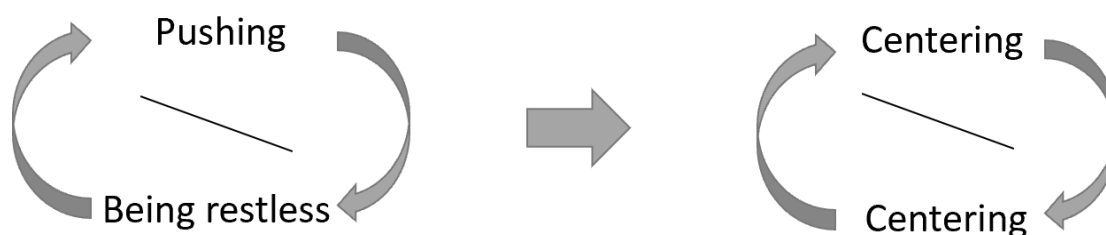
Figure 16: Field shift from restless to composed

Becoming aware of her embodied responsivities to this situation, Hanna increased her capacity to *"break free."* With this awareness, the class's restlessness afforded her own self-regulation: *"I was totally conscious that I must do something to reduce my stress … so that the group can calm down."* She suspended the impulse to push through, and instead announced to the class what they would do differently this day. The students became attentive and interested, and *"a moment of calm"* emerged. The atmosphere shifted from stressed and restless to a more relaxed and attentive quality, and the educator subsequently experienced her students as *"content"* and the lesson as *"a successful morning."* The shift was brought along by a transforming pattern of interaction, coupling the educator's centering, i.e., mindfulness and self-regulation, taking decisive leadership in response to the disruption, with the student's regulating their arousal and focusing their attention.

5.2.4. Perceived Challenge: Parent Meetings with Affective Charge (Field Shifts I and J)

The following two examples concern the dyadic field between educator and parent, describing field shifts from withdrawing to attuning to need beneath the parent's upset behavior (Example I) and from a power struggle to a collaboration on an eye-level (Example J).

Example I: From Withdrawing to Attuning to Need Beneath Upset Behavior

Affordance of the Habitual Social Field

The central affordances in this situation concerned a father who was emotionally upset about how the school dealt with his daughter's issues in her class. For Hanna, it was the first appointment with the father, scheduled to address his son's school entry. Hanna initially met the parent while he was arguing with another member of the school staff who introduced the father to her with the words: *"'By the way, this is your appointment who is ranting on the floor here.'"*

Describing the habitual way in which such situations would have unfolded, Hanna contended that the father's intense emotional expressions *("he's ranting and quarreling in the hallway and doesn't get what he wants") ("rampage")* would have evoked a responsivity of feeling

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"scared off", insecure and slightly overwhelmed. In similar situations in the past, she worried whether it was safe to be alone in a room with the father and rejected the appointment *("'Why do I have to do this?'" "'Can I really go to a room with him alone?'")*. Furthermore, Hanna used to interpret the parents' emotional upset as an obstacle to a constructive dialogue. Confronted with an angry father, she used to anticipate that the conversation would *"never work out"*, construing the father as an *"annoying troublemaker who does not do what I want."* Habitually, she tried to avoid such parent meetings or insisted on doing them with a colleague. While she communicated with parents using phrases such as *"'you are the expert for your child'"*, really accepting the parent's opinion was difficult for her.

Autonomy of the Habitual Social Field

In meeting angry and upset parents, the interaffectivity likely coupled the parent's angry expressions with Hanna's responsivity of overwhelm and insecurity. Simultaneously, seeing the parent as threatening and a source of *"trouble,"* she rejected the parent. This bodily responsivity likely contributed to the parent's feeling of being misunderstood and rejected. Hence, the field between the two would exert a pull into an autonomous, self-reinforcing pattern of rejecting and criticizing. Within this field, trying to address the topics on the meeting agenda may have potential furthered an escalation, inviting the parent to feel misunderstood, leading to more intense expressions of anger or a withdrawal from the meeting.

Compared to the habitual unfolding of such meetings, the affordance shifted in terms of Hanna's view of the father *("I saw the concerned father")* and her embodied responsivity, feeling confidence. Furthermore, Hanna also expressed herself differently in the way she was leading the conversation.

Shift in Field Affordance

The anger of the father ceased to afford a defensive reaction from Hanna. Instead of rejecting and withdrawing from him, she felt safe, confident, and capable of coping with him. She explicitly attributed this confidence to the EMS training. Confronted with the father's complaints, she was reminded of the EMS module on parent meetings. Hanna suspended her plan for the meeting to make room for the father's emotional state before addressing what was on the agenda for them *("I'd rather listen for five minutes to him and what he is annoyed about" "meeting him where he is")*. Her construal of the father shifted significantly. Instead of rejecting the father and objectifying him as a source of annoyance and threat, Hanna attuned to *"the concerned father"* focusing on the positive intent motivating his upset appearance: *"It was not the annoying troublemaker who does not do what I want. But … someone sat there who was worried about his daughter and whom I can convince of also thinking about his son."* Accordingly, the father's upset expressions turned into an invitation for the educator to show her interest in his underlying concerns. Hanna expressed her understanding for the father and offered her support. Moreover, she found a way of de-escalating the situation by convincing the father that he could not personally confront his daughter's classmates. By taking the perspective of the father and responding to his emotions and needs as legitimate, a collaborative atmosphere was created. Only then, Hanna addressed her topic for the

appointment. Now, when telling the father, *"you are the expert for your child"*, Hanna experienced genuine acceptance for his opinion, also expressing the limitations of her knowledge about his son.

Shift in Field Autonomy: Emergent Patterns of Interaction
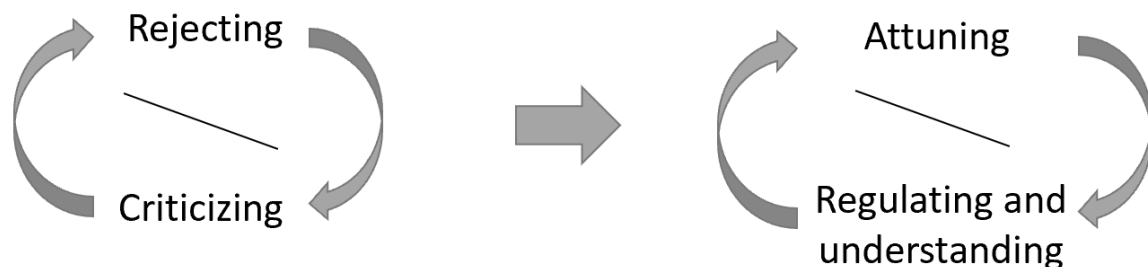
Figure 17: Field shift from critical to attuned

The shifts in affordance invited the emergence of new patterns of interaction between the educator and the parent. Hanna's attunement supported the father in regulating his anger and invited his reciprocating the felt understanding, bringing forth a collaborative atmosphere of mutual understanding.

Example J: From Power Struggle to Eye-Level Collaboration

Another example was provided in relation to an appointment with parents that were skeptical towards school. Motivated to improve the collaboration with the parents, Julia and a colleague jointly prepared the meeting based on the EMS training. The father's behaviors, which Julia perceived as dominant and aggressive, immediately invited a responsivity of aggression and the impulse to reciprocate the perceived attack. She attributed to the father that he was unwilling to collaborate with her and in turn became herself less collaborative. Thus, teacher and parent found themselves in an escalatory cycle of resisting against the other's perceived attempt to dominate.

However, the affordance shifted as Julia became aware of her relational responsivity – irritability and an impulse to attack – and the trajectory which acting out this responsivity created for the quality of the meeting. With this relational awareness and the intention not to act from her irritability but to create a collaborative atmosphere, Julia suspended her interpretation about the father's *"wheezing."* What habitually appeared as a 'trigger' turned into an invitation for inquiry. The educator asked the father: *"You are wheezing. Are you not well?"* The father answered explaining his dislike of the obligatory COVID-19 protection mask, which opened the possibility for the educators and the father to collaborate in handling this issue in a way that was acceptable for him. As response, the father *"softened."* Habitually, he would have ended the meeting, leaving the room protesting loudly. Now, the conversation was *"more personal"* and *"mutually respectful"* and took place *"on an eye-level."* The educators furthermore intentionally fostered this atmosphere by showing of their own limitations and consistently inviting parent's collaboration as partners.
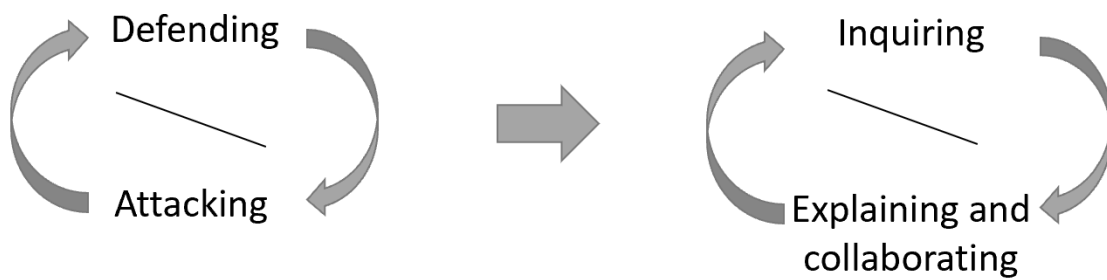
Figure 18: Field shift from adversarial to collaborative

A crucial bifurcation point in this sequence was the way in which Julia responded to the father's wheezing. Here, a transforming pattern of interaction emerged, coupling Julia's inquiring with the father's explaining. This shifted the tone for the rest of the conversation, enabling the generative unfolding of the meeting.

5.2.5. Summary of Field Shifts

Synthesizing the dyadic field shift examples illustrated above, the following paragraphs provides insight into some more generic factors at play during these shifts. Figure 19 maps the reconstructions onto the suggested social field analysis framework. Several crucial actions and 'micro-gestures' (Petitmengin 2006) are revealed as contributing to shifts towards more generative social fields.
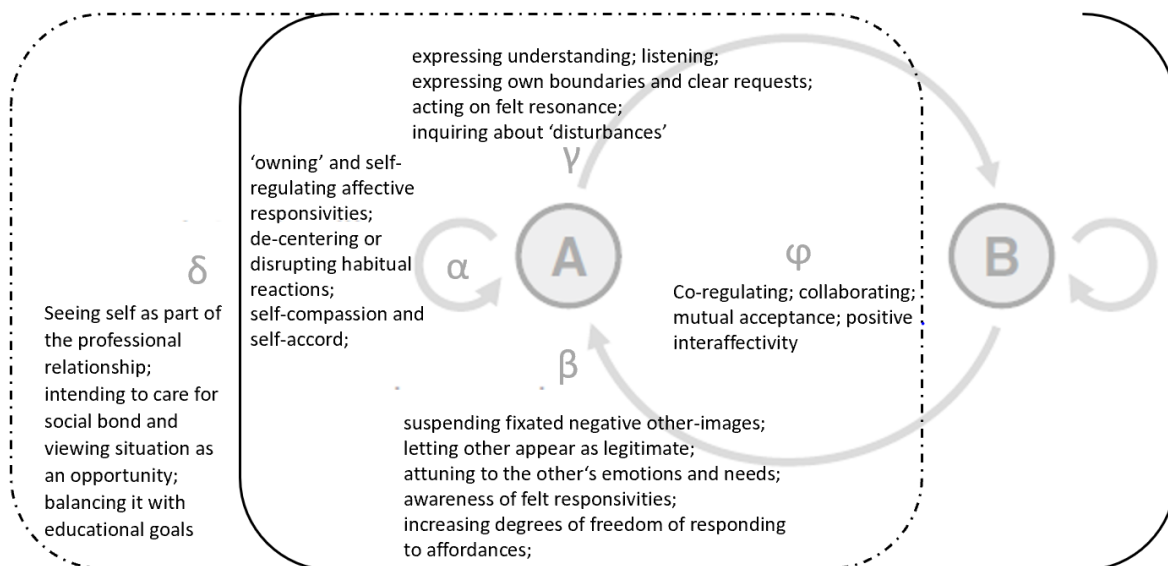
Figure 19: (Micro-)actions contributing to generative social fields

In terms of their own intrabodily, -affective, and cognitive processes (α in Figure 19), these educators reflected on the field shifts in terms of an increased awareness of their relational responsivities, including their habitual bodily impulses, immediate affective reactions,

cognitive strategies, and the capacity to suspend these reactions. Furthermore, they spoke of self-compassion with their own negative affect and limitations and coherence with their own values and needs, depicting a state of being one may term 'self-accord'. Generally, the educators conceived themselves as part of the relationship (δ), intending to care its quality. Moreover, the change moments afforded enacting this care, while balancing this with the educational goals. What is more, the educators reported releasing negative other-images and attuning to the other's emotional states and needs (β), and addressing the emotional state of the other, e.g., by listening and showing understanding. The educators expressed their own personal boundaries instead of habitually disciplining the students (γ), shifting from reactivity to calm. These micro-actions coalesce into a greater capacity of shaping the interaction's quality, one may refer to as relational competence. Furthermore, field patterns and atmospheres emerged that were marked by co-regulating, cohering, inquiring, mutually accepting one another, and positive interaffectivity. The gestures enacted by the educators in response the social field' affordances are depicted in Table 4. Micro-actions refer here to the educators' ways of responding to the perceived situational demands such as by attuning to another's feelings or by inquiring about a disturbance in the relationship. Importantly, educators acted not only on the 'external' features of the situation, but they also cared for their own sense of their own inner condition, for example, by regulating their own arousal.

Table 4: Affordances and corresponding micro-actions

Affordance (Domain)	(Micro-)Actions
Self	
Stress, bodily arousal, and tension	Self-Regulate (e.g., breathing)
Pressure, high expectations	Suspend, re-frame, activate kindness, accept limitations
Own negative affect	Self-Regulate (self-compassion)
Other	
Negative other-image	Suspend, re-frame, attune to need beneath behavior, accept other's limitations
Student negative affect	Attune, provide emotional support
Student 'disturbing' lesson	Re-frame, self-regulate, express own boundary and request
Relationship	
Poor 'contact' with student	Intend to build contact
Confronted with disturbance	Self-regulate, inquire about disturbance

5.3. Social Field Shifts (Micro-Level): Generic Themes

Taken together, the interviewed educators spoke about the field shifts as instantiations of a learning process induced by the EMS project, one that focused on *"the relational level."* They

portrayed the process employing a visual and a somatic metaphor. The first refers to an *"EMS view"* or *"a different view"* promoted by the training and available as something they can take on or activate. The second metaphor frequently used pointed to a more pathic and embodied aspect. Here, educators spoke about *"being sensitized"* by EMS or, as Julia put it, referring to her experience of the EMS modules: *"It got sedimented in my body."* (Julia, Pos. 33).

The educators' learning process shifted how they appraised their habits – seeing habitual strategies fail – and the situational affordances that during the change moments turned into invitations to enact change. It further brought along an increased capacity to "break" and suspend their habits, such as a professional task-oriented habitus, enabling the educators to better sense the other's needs. Furthermore, the educators spoke of learning to consider themselves as part of their relationships, also sensing their own feelings and needs and meeting them with greater care and compassion. What is more, they expressed being aware of their bonds to students (and to parents) and their intention to take responsibility for the quality of these bonds. Here, the educators depicted instances in which they were able to act and communicate according to this felt responsibility, thereby shaping and transforming the relational level. Feeling their own relational self-efficacy, and the effect on students and parents and on their relationships to them motivated to continue. See Figure 20 below for an overview. The specifics of each theme will be outlined subsequently.

5.3.1. "I Do Not Get into Contact with this Child": Seeing Habits Fail

The first theme was constructed referring to the educators' reflections on the failing of habitual response and interaction patterns. The educators described occasions in which the interactions at school regularly did not unfold as desired, reaching their personal boundary, ending up in similar negative patterns, or not getting *"into contact"* with some students. Hence, despite their efforts, the educators occasionally failed in establishing the kinds of relationships they would desire. All the repetitive and habitual patterns of interactions reconstructed in the earlier chapter (examples A – H) point to such failing strategies, for instance in example A when Linda felt that she and her student were *"dragging in opposite directions and no one is happy with it."* The interviewees mentioned a range of unique as well as more generic automatic or deliberate action and feeling tendencies on their own part which they saw as unsuccessful, such as disciplining students and thereby co-creating an atmosphere of pressure and hostility, too rigidly holding on to the educational goals or lesson plan, treating all students the same way, or acting from a place of emotional reactivity, among others. Being caught in such patterns was experienced as very stressful, as for instance Julia pointed out in relation to parent collaboration: *"[It is] unbelievably exhausting to lead these kinds of parent meetings along with always the same kinds of fights, so pointless fights"* (Julia, Pos. 195).

Many failing habits were described to involve an embodied agitation, like a physiological fight- or flight-mode:

> *"It is simply this […] tension, you really feel it. Everything is somehow contracting […]. One notices that the (…) voice is a bit louder. One is faster, somehow, while*

talking. And// somehow/ one does not have the strength, or the ease, or the time, to really observe: How are the others doing? Rather one is somehow in one's hamster wheel. […]. One cannot see how individual children are getting a little desperate and one doesn't really notice it. […] And this does not feel good. […] I do not live up to […] my expectations of how I would like to be as a pedagogue." (Rolf, Pos. 221-233)

As Rolf expressed in this quote, seeing a strategy or state of being as unsuccessful implies a discrepancy between the current situation and the educators' own values, intentions, or desired relational qualities. Sometimes this awareness of a failing strategy was rather general and referred to a particular *"type"* of children, as one educator contended: *"It has always been clear to me. This is a type of a child where I notice: ,mmh – [irritated tone] I do not succeed in establishing contact.'"*

Here, *"contact"* was the desired outcome. Zeroing in on her experience reveals the specific habitual strategies she had tried with this *"type"* of child without success:

"A habitual phrase […] from my bag of tricks was […] 'what do you need now in order to calm down' right? 'Now it must get calm here. What do you need now? Does this thing help? Or this thing?' And I was never successful with this." (Julia, Pos. 46)

Julia furthermore described that the habit of asking the children questions is deeply entrenched in her pedagogical approach (*This 'What do you need?'. We think this makes as good pedagogues, right?"*). This illustrates that the habitual (re-)action patterns and strategies often reflect some basic professional or personal belief about "successful relating." The EMS training has challenged some of these beliefs and habits, providing a different perspective on why they might fail and what else might be possible. Accordingly, Julia reflected that asking questions may lead to a lack of leadership, burdening the child with too much responsibility for the situation.

Hence, the EMS training shifted the criteria for the kinds of action strategies seen as a failure. This shows that the educators not only experienced failing in creating the relationships they desired *("not getting into contact")* or that they were caught in undesirable dynamics leading to exhaustion, but in fact they reflected on how they themselves may have contributed to these outcomes.

Notably, a clarity about one's failures also entailed being realistic about one's own level of empathy or compassion. Julia highlighted that educators tended to consider themselves as empathic, but, she contended, this often was a false belief, leading them to misconceive of EMS as something they were already familiar with: *"This is the mistake, that we believe we already know it all: 'We are all very empathic' and the like, so-to-say, by virtue of our profession. And this really does not make sense. This is not how we are."* (Julia, Pos. 396) Similarly, Maria illustrated dismantling this false belief: *"Before [EMS] I thought I am great; I am a great teacher and I do it super well: I understand the children and am attuned. But no. One is, well, in this stress."* Moreover, she illustrated realizing after an EMS module how her

own actions impacted a student: *"I discipline him all the time and I say something which in fact hurts him. And this every day."*

Hence, EMS fostered in these educators an awareness of habitual tendencies and impulses perpetuating undesired results and this view of oneself could also be confrontational. Most educators also mentioned relationships to students they felt unable to improve despite being aware of the issue. Here, the awareness of failing strategies may have been challenging to their professional self-esteem. However, in many other cases, noticing the failure of habitual strategies opened up the opportunity to enact change: *"And then there was a moment in which I noticed that I don't get any further. With the things I usually do, I won't get any further and I must do something else."*

To conclude with, educators reflected on the habitual reactions that played an important role both in motivating and in enacting change as outlined in the next theme. Hence, an important feature of the changes during EMS was articulated in this theme centering on the domain of HABIT (see this summed up in Figure 20 below)

5.3.2. "Do it Differently": Situational Affordance Inviting Change

This theme describes the lived micro-level context that appeared to the educators as an opportunity to enact a desired change. All interviewees spoke in their accounts of various moments of change about noticing new possibilities, that they could do something differently or that they remembered something from an EMS module which then guided their actions. Within the daily work at school, a wide spectrum of situations was described to have in common a change-inviting affordance, ranging from students' expressions of difficult emotions and special needs, behaviors that "disturb" the lesson, restlessness in the classroom to difficult parent meetings. Perceiving this opportunity involved a sense of agency and confidence, manifesting in expressions such as *"Now I test it out"* or *"I will do it differently."* Construing an interpersonal situation as holding such an opportunity could be a significant affective shift in itself:

> *"I was not stressed as usual. In this case it was excitement: Now the situation is up ahead where EMS module four can prove its value. Now I test it out."* (Julia, Pos. 62).

Sometimes the participants anticipated this opportunity to enact change and prepared for an upcoming encounter based on the input from EMS – both with respect to students and parents:

> *"We were aware that it is a challenging couple of parents, and we explicitly prepared ourselves with the knowledge of the fifth EMS module by saying: OK, we will observe very closely: 'where are the parents now? How are they doing?'"* (Julia, Pos. 341)

At other times, the participants suddenly noticed the opportunity for change during an interaction, in particular right after the EMS modules *("After every module I had this kind of*

situation in which I noticed that I can apply the things we have discussed in the module.") This also concerns examples of change which are characterized as direct outcomes of insights or learnings during an EMS module. Educators refer to these as *"a real aha experience"* opening *"a whole new set of possibilities."*

The perceived affordance was described to stimulate the educators to deliberately prepare and reorient themselves to act differently. Franziska illustrated the thought process she experienced while trying to help a desperate child which was sitting right in front of her during a special ed class:

"We have spoken about this [in the EMS module]. Now look where you can go. […] Back there [pointing with her hands behind her head] was EMS, and there [pointing in front of her] was the child. And what do I do with it now? How do I bring this together? How can I use the chance that I have? […] And then I thought: 'See what your possibilities are'. It was really about: 'Do it differently than you usually do.'" (Franziska, Pos. 58)

Julia used similar words to describe her inner speech when preparing to meet someone in a new way (e.g., *"There is enough time for this. I go to him later. That will be enough. And I will do it differently."*)

Notably, it is not only the "external stimuli" in these situations which were seen as opportunities for change. Rather, in a state of meta-awareness of their own involvement in the situations, the educators perceived their own affective and behavioral tendencies as 'inner affordances' inviting a possible – and necessary – change.

> *"I noticed that my head was full of things when I entered the class, and I thought: 'Ah now this boy will be chatting again.' And now I actually do it in such a way that when I unlock the classroom, this moment of the key, when I put the key into the lock and turn it, in this moment I breathe [breathing out], I ground myself and release some stress. Then I can encounter the boy in a more relaxed way."* (Linda, Pos. 27)

Concluding, this theme centered on shifts in how the educators saw the SITUATION they were in, which presented an opportunity to enact change (see Figure 20 below).

5.3.3. "A Break Between Stimulus and Response": Suspending Habit, Enabling New Pathways

This theme centers a disruption of habitual and automatic behaviors and tendencies which was fostered by the EMS training. The educators spoke of experiencing themselves during the moments of change as being aware of their habitual action and feeling tendencies while interacting with other people. Furthermore, they felt they were able to suspend these tendencies and portrayed themselves as more mindful of the pulls and pushes of the situational affordances they usually felt caught in. Hence, mindfulness was experienced as a capacity to notice and suspend one's habitual responses to the situational affordances.

"Usually, one is caught in one's affect and [...] too much in this reacting, reacting, reacting. And in this case, it was like: Bup. Stimulus. Okay, he [the student] is there. Now I walk towards him, right? Well, this break between stimulus and response."
(Julia, Pos. 79)

These automatic or habitual tendencies involve behavioral and affective domains, some of which seem to be more personal and idiosyncratic and others more generic and reflecting the systemic conditions of schooling and the habitual ways of fulfilling certain pedagogical tasks. A more generic tendency was a habitual task-orientation which sometimes tended to become fast paced, demanding, and rigid.

In their experiences of moments of change, the educators spoke about the momentary suspension of this pressured task-orientation as a premise for attuning to students' feelings. For instance, Franziska paraphrased her inner process during a moment of change laying out the sequence of this shift from task-orientation *("and the task and oh, he [the student] doesn't do it")* to noticing the student's feelings (*"the [boy's] desperation, oh what do I do?"*) to suspending her habitual orientation and instead "being with" the child *("But then stop! And then, then I was simply with him [the boy].")* This process was facilitated by a heightened state of somatic awareness *("I was aware of all this much more consciously, what I do with my body and what he does with his body.")* "Stopping" seemed to require a subtle effort and the capacity to do so felt like a success and necessary for attuning to the child's needs: *"I was so happy that I managed to stop [...]. To feel for myself, it is too fast, and to allow this stop and thereby getting in contact with the child. This was I believe the success which I had in this moment."* (Franziska, Pos. 72)

This mindful suspension of habitual tendencies was also described as a de-identification from one's professional habitus, as the following quote illustrates:

"There is again my [...] educator, who is always telling me: 'Well, this has to function now', but the children do not function that way. Well / and this / the letting go of this. Instead, so-to-say, letting [the student] lead. When is he capable of which step. And I simply accompany him." (Linda, Pos. 442)

Apparently, Linda observed the pushes and pulls of her demanding pedagogical habitus from a stance of mindfulness and meta-awareness. Like the prior example, she too pointed out that suspending this habitual stance enabled relating to students with more attunement. In contrast, she illustrated the stance of being caught in the educator:

"I am only [...] the educator. I must have a solution. I must teach this to the child. How do I do this? And then it's rumbling in my head. I think of all the strategies I know. And then I do not notice much from the child anymore. Whether it is desperate. Whether it is relaxed. Whether it is calm. Whether it's nervous. I do not notice this properly, because I am so busy thinking." (Linda, Pos. 271)

Importantly, the educators did not speak about entirely dismissing their professional habitus, but of a greater flexibility in shifting their focus from the task to the person. This flexibility also

entailed adapting their pedagogical goals and rules to the given student or situation they encountered. More specifically, this meant suspending aspects of the professional habitus which were seen as problematic for the relational quality, such as enforcing their rules too strictly and in a way that may lead to negative unintended consequences:

> *"What I connect to Empathie macht Schule is that I try to take the pressure off […] This does not mean that I do not have any wishes or expectations. But when they are tied to such a high pressure, they neither serve me nor the child."* (Jill, Pos. 222)

Jill illustrated this point with the case of one of her students from a particularly difficult family background:

> *"There are certain school duties. And I simply do not get them [from him] […]. When his mother needs him as a translator in an agency, he doesn't show up to school. […] As a teacher […] I could get stuck in these things [German literally: "mich festbeißen" "bite myself into it"]. And I simply let them go […] and the more I let go, the more he likes going to school."*

Jill did not portray this letting go as a lack of engagement – she also mentioned having activated all options to help the boy – but as a way of adapting to what was possible in the situation. This is further described under the theme of acceptance.

Conversely, the opposite was also a common theme among the educators: Without this mindful suspension of habitual tendencies, one was more likely to enact patters of irritation, reactivity, and lack of attunement to students – simply missing the necessary awareness and sensitivity to do so.

Linda illustrated this lack of awareness when she talked about her conflict with a student. Being asked how the student had usually reacted to her disciplining prior to the moment of change during EMS, she responded:

> *"I can't tell you exactly because I was too busy with the situation. […] I reacted too much to the disturbance. [...] and did not pay attention to the relationship. It's hard to explain. Well, I did not really see him."* (Linda, Pos. 205-212)

Maria also outlined this process as part of her professional habitus. She depicted how a student got a little bit stiller and more silent after she had disciplined him, and during the interview she contemplated whether he felt sadness: *"It could be, but I'd have to observe more closely, […] I do not take the time for this, otherwise this would not be how I am. Well, if I knew 'Oh he is dying of sorrow', then most probably I would do it less than ever."* (Maria, Pos. 158) Instead to attuning to the boy, she maintained her professional habitus marked by time-pressure and an avoidance of seemingly difficult feelings.

Again, this illustrates that the disruption or suspension of "being caught" in habitual tendencies, is a prerequisite for certain shifts in relational quality. Hence, a crucial point

shared by many of the field shift reconstructions was that mindfulness facilitated a break between stimulus – or habitual affordance – and response. This break was a necessary condition to attune to others. Furthermore, it was a suspension not only of the habitual behavioral, but also the socio-cognitive and -affective tendencies, as will be explored in the next theme. It opened a space of possibilities for responding in more flexible and attuned ways which were more conducive to empathic and collaborative relationships.

Concluding, this theme focused on the educators' accounts of enacting a "BREAK" from their habitual tendencies and actions (see Figure 20 below).

5.3.4. "I Had an Image of Him in my Head and that Got in the Way:" Letting the Other Appear as Legitimate Other

This theme was constructed to account for the shifts depicted by the educators in how they were sensing the other with greater attunement. The educators spoke about how participating in the EMS training motivated and enabled them to better understand students' or parents' motives and needs during their work. They spoke of this attunement and perspective-taking as something which could not always be readily switched on but required effort. For instance, at times, enacting attunement required the release of negative and fixated images and opinions about the other, which was difficult and not always successful. Hence, this theme partly extends the former one on suspending automatic tendencies towards the habitual and fixed views one holds about another and which characterize one's socio-cognitive and -affective processes. This suspension and attunement can be referred to as the act of letting the other appear as a legitimate other. Generally, increased sensitivity and attunement to others' emotions and needs was highlighted by the educators as one of the EMS training's main effects. As Franziska put it: *"To enter the child's perspective and attend to what the child needs in the moment. That is what EMS has made with me."* (Franziska, Pos. 26)

Greater attunement for the other's needs was depicted in several situations portrayed by the educators, including students' difficult feelings and to students' and parents' expressions that were challenging for the educators. To illustrate the first type of situation, Franziska's response to a distressed boy (Example D) in her class pointed to a greater capacity to acknowledge and regulate children's needs. Sensing the boy's difficult feelings, she felt that it was not enough to just relieve him from the task he was upset about: *"'He might need even more relief', […] I belief I felt this in this moment."* Instead of a task-oriented *"quick fix"* solution, she successfully supported the boy in regulating his emotion. Notably, the boy could finish his task and the teacher experienced more *"warmth"* and *"connection"* to the student. The educators also mentioned intentionally taking the perspective of students whose behaviors were challenging them. For instance, Linda shared in Example F that she *"could not get into contact"* with a boy and felt irritated by constantly being called for help to close his zipper. She spoke about realizing in an EMS module that the very behavior which upset her, and which seemed to express an age-inappropriate dependency on her help – was in fact the

student's way of trying to create contact with her. This felt insight changed how she viewed and felt toward the student (joy and responsibility instead of frustration) and subsequently guided the way she related to him. Instead of rejecting his request, she responded to it by helping the student and chatting with him in the break, and thereby, over time establishing a *"trusting relationship."*

Taking others' perspectives was also described as helpful in relation to parents, as Hanna illustrated in Example I on her appointment with an upset father. Confronted with the father's loud and complaining appearance, Hanna attended to the concerns causing his upset instead of viewing him as a source of annoyance and threat *("annoying troublemaker")*: *"The view that he actually is a concerned father, this I believe has become clearer due to the training. […] The last modules were quite tight one after the other. In this concentrated form, it was much more present."* Seeing the father through this lens, Hanna felt safer and more confident herself for the conversation *("Usually I tended to avoid certain parent meetings.")* She chose to listen to the father and show him her understanding, instead of insisting right away on the meeting agenda. Their conversation about what was on the agenda could then take place in a collaborative atmosphere. These and other examples illustrate that the educators' mentioned how attuning to the needs which may motivate what others do and how they feel was perceived to improve relational quality and even professional efficiency.

Sometimes, the educators spoke about not being readily able to sense and attune to the other due to their negative images of them. The educators elucidated that these mental images they were holding about others could prevent them from seeing the others accurately, and, furthermore, from accepting them as a legitimate other. As Linda paraphrased her habitual mental process in relation to a particular student she was struggling with: *"I really had a finished image of him in my head. 'This is the way the boy is. Every day. And this is how I will experience him now.'"* She continues: *"And of course, it always confirmed itself, right? Of course, because I was seeing him that way."* (Linda, Pos. 205-219)

Notably, her quote illustrates a "triple-loop" learning process about the impact of her own construal of the other on the relationship. She understood for herself that her habitual, negatively skewed interpretations of the boy's intentions and behaviors contributed to the poor quality of their relationship just like a self-fulfilling prophecy. Here, the educators depicted reinforcing negative or escalatory interaction loops. In some cases, they described experiencing an affective affordance as forceful pull towards their immediate and habitual negative interpretation of the other. Julia provided an Example Furing a challenging parent meeting with a father who she habitually experienced as dominant and rejecting towards school:

> *"Actually, I noticed how the [parent's] wheezing was upsetting me, and I was upset about being upset. … 'Now the trouble is starting again.' … We sit here because we want to do it differently and be well together. To understand each other. And dear god, couldn't we just meet on a completely different level?"* (Julia, Pos. 204)

She described more closely the field's habitual affordance: The father's loud wheezing appeared to her as his attempt to dominate the meeting. This evoked in her the immediate impulse to defend herself and reciprocate the perceived aggression *("I know that I react to aggression with counter-aggression.")* She recognized this instance as a bifurcation point for the meeting and anticipated that if she reacted aggressively, the parent meeting would turn into a *"pointless struggle."* De-centering herself from her immediate and habitual impulse and interpretation as well as holding her intention to *"meet on a completely different level"* made it possible for her to realize – the *"surprising"* *"eye opener in this moment"*: *"Yeah! I don't have to see this as aggression."* (Julia, Pos. 220-222) Hence, instead of counter-aggression, Julia could enact a more generative response – a microscopic transformation – by inquiring about the thing which was triggering her. As a result, accommodating the parent's reasons for his wheezing not only prevented an escalation of aggression, but even initiated a collaborative and personal atmosphere on *"an eye level"*. She contended that without EMS she *"would have never asked about the wheezing"* (Julia, Pos. 177), but *"would have simply unreeled my own interpretations in my head."*

This exemplifies that the process of seeing beyond one's ingrained view and letting the other appear as legitimate is not easily put into practice, especially when conflict seems to call for defense reactions. As in Julia's case, attunement may require a strong presence of mind and intentionality to shape a different relationship as well as sufficient knowledge and skill to regulate one's own affective reaction. Accordingly, the educators also spoke about their difficulties with attuning to particular students, or when confronted with particular student behaviors, highlighting that despite the EMS training, attunement was not always easy.

Sometimes, releasing the negative view of the other wasn't possible for the educators without also shifting their underlying professional beliefs along with their own corresponding emotions. Linda in example A spoke about the negative image she was holding about a boy. Perceiving that the boy again confirmed this image, she described: *"I said my phrase or disciplined him, whatever was coming up in the situation. But in doing so I was not really aware of him."* (Linda, Pos. 218) Zeroing in on this situation, revealed that what might appear as a habitual and ubiquitous professional strategy to manage the classroom in fact carried an affective load caused by a subtle and quite personal dilemma. Linda's belief prior to EMS had been that it was her task as an educator to *"wipe out"* the students' disturbing behavior and *"to change their personality."* (Linda, Pos. 500-501) These high aspirations evoked a feeling of failure when she was confronted with the student's lack of desired change – regardless of whether this lack was caused by resistance or actual difficulties. With her professional self-esteem being threatened by her own high demands, she reverted to a defensive stance from which the student's behavior appeared as an attack:

"Before (EMS) I took it often personally. 'He resists my changing him" Or "My rules, the ones that I establish here, he does not care about them." (Linda, Pos. 136)

The tendencies of a being demanding and criticizing, taking student's behaviors personally, and being emotionally reactive were more widely alluded to by the interviewees as challenges to meeting students with attunement. They for instance mentioned that in acting from a state of emotional irritability they were *"not doing justice to the children."* The latter quote quite literally expresses the sense of not having treated the other as a 'legitimate other'.

Furthermore, the educators also spoke about being unable despite EMS to attune to children whose difficult behaviors, such as sudden aggressive outbursts, throwing objects at them or bullying other children, caused strong emotional reactions in the educators.

Linda mentioned how the EMS training she learned to let the individual student appear as a legitimate other, by questioning her problematic professional belief of *"having to change the child"* and shifting her demanding and self-critical attitude towards greater acceptance.

Linda outlined that "acceptance" was at the core of relationship: *"mutually being aware of and respecting one another. […] Accepting the other. And not always saying: ,You are wrong,' but ,the way you are is okay.'* (Linda, Pos. 509)

In the change moments, Linda depicted instances of being able to extend this acceptance to the students, both those who "disturbed" the class as in example A (*"I learned to have a different view on it. It's not his fault. He is the way he is."*) and those who had special needs (Example F) (*"I can accept him as he is, "in his otherness"*). In both cases, acceptance fostered an *"accurate awareness"* of the children and a *"trusting"* and *"flexible bond."*

To sum up, this theme has treated the educators' reflections on their attunement to students, which at times required the suspension of habitual and fixed views about another. Hence, the theme centered on a shift in how they sensed the OTHER (see Figure 20 below).

5.3.5. "Allowing to Focus on Myself:" Compassion and Care for Self as Base for Meeting Others

This theme was constructed to account for the educator's reflections on cultivating self-compassion and self-care due to the EMS training. Furthermore, the theme outlines a reciprocal intertwinement of the qualities with which one meets self and other: Learning to be compassionate with oneself enabled compassion for others.

The educators highlighted that EMS fostered self-compassion and self-care. While they expected that such a training would focus on understanding others' needs, the training's emphasis on seeing themselves as "part of" their relationships was surprising. It contrasted the tendency for them as educators to only look after the children and focus their attention on students while 'forgetting' about themselves. Julia thus characterized her experience of EMS:

> *"To experience that it is OK when I attend to myself. And to experience myself in this relationship to the children, above all. To parents, too, to colleagues, but especially to the children. And being allowed to have a focus on myself. […] I had not been aware of this somehow. […] One must always take care of the children. […] But that oneself is more a part of this relationship […] has become clearer and it changed a lot for me."* (Linda, Pos. 11)

In considering themselves as part of their relationships, the educators depicted realizing that their own inner condition was affecting the quality of their relationships. For instance, Franziska reflected on the passage between home and work: She had been aware that stress

in her work could affect her children at home *"when I carry something home from school"* and that it was important to *"try to separate it."* However, until EMS she had not considered this passage to run in both directions. She *"never applied this to occupational issues."* She realized that *"it is just the same […] when I […] carry something with me from home […] I am still myself. And when I am aware of it, I can act differently. That has impacted me a lot."* (Franziska, Pos. 17)

The discovery and permission of the self-in-relationship implied an emphasis on self-care and emotion-regulation. Rolf for instance pointed out, *"To really look after oneself, […] that got clearer to me and was supported by the EMS Project, that is incredibly important."* The expression he and several other educators used, in German: "auf sich achten" both means "looking after" in the sense of "taking care of" and "being mindful of" – it contains the root of the German word for mindfulness, "Achtsamkeit." Similarly, Hanna contended, *"I am more aware that […] I must be mindful of how I am doing. […] The basic premise for a successful day is actually that I arrive here in a good way."*

Another educator verbalized this realization: *"Only someone who can rest inwardly, be confident with oneself and return to oneself, is also able to carry this outward […] and react to some situations with more equanimity."* (Focus Group 1, Pos. 45)

In very pragmatic terms, self-care and self-regulation were not only conceived of as beneficial for the educators themselves, but as a prerequisite for regulating students' arousal successfully. Hanna contended in reference to a change moment: "*I was totally conscious that I must do something to reduce my stress … so that the group can calm down."*

The capacity to self-regulate own emotions and arousal was also portrayed to play a pivotal role in most change moments. Often, the educators outlined that it had a direct effect on the classroom atmosphere or on single students as in the case shared by Hanna and in examples E and F. Similarly, Rolf portrayed illustratively the direct impact which his embodied presence and his conscious breathing had on the children:

> *"I have learned that it is possible to take a breath in front of the children in the classroom. […] You don't even have to go outside. […] They can notice it. That is totally OK. They watch and then become aware of it when you stand there and you say [breathing out]: 'OK, kids'. Sometimes one doesn't say anything, you know? It's enough to just [breathing in and out]. The children register immediately when an adult breathes in and out in such a way. […] They become automatically calmer themselves. […] And to the contrary: It is good to show it to the children, and even to colleagues. […] I think in the past [before EMS], I wouldn't have done this in front of the class."* (Rolf, Pos. 245-263)

In the extract above, Rolf considered his self-regulation to be both a role model for the children and to directly impact himself and his students. He alluded to a process of co-regulation, in which his own state of somatic awareness and nervous system regulation was transmitted to others in the social field.

To sum up what has been thematized so far, the educators spoke of realizing in the EMS training that they played an effective role in their relationships impacting the others for better or worse, and of deriving from that an implicit responsibility for this impact which stresses the importance of regulating their own stress and negative emotions. A crucial feature in educators' reflections was that they highlighted the act of "allowing" and an affective quality of self-compassion in face of their own difficult emotions and every-day stressors. They spoke about learning to see their own needs as legitimate – legitimate selves, so to say, in relation to a legitimate other. They felt invited by the EMS training to consider and take care of their own well-being and to develop a compassionate and mindful attitude towards themselves and their needs and feelings. Franziska elaborated on her experience of learning to *"have mercy with"* herself in the first EMS module:

> *"To simply be mindful of ourselves and to see what is good for us. This opened the lock a little bit, of everything needing to be perfect all the time. […] we took this phrase from there. This: 'I allow myself to do certain things or to just leave them, too'. To have mercy with myself instead of such high expectations all the time. Rather like 'I am here now, and I do my best.' […] Of course, I must question myself, that's for sure, but I should not be ungracious or too critical with myself"* (Franziska, Pos. 40).

Franziska here outlined how her way of relating to herself shifted during and resulting from her experiences of the EMS module. In comparison to other trainings Franziska highlighted that EMS addressed *"the emotionality"* (Franziska, Pos. 10). Usually, *you "never have this opportunity in your professional context."* She further outlined that EMS had *"an incredible focus on you personally. I have worked so much with myself in EMS. I was totally exhausted during these days, and it had an endless effect within me. Simply because I looked so much within myself."* Others similarly highlighted the effect of the EMS modules on her awareness of herself: *"Every module had this turning point, which hit the mark. It had nothing to do with the school in the end, but instead was actually a therapy session for my twisted soul – I became aware of something. […] But it was really FOR me […] It so-to-say pushed me forward."* (Rhia, Pos. 151). Rolf spoke of an intensity: *"For me it was also intense – intense in a good way. But I needed to go for a walk afterwards"* (Rolf, Pos. 73). Julia characterized the process she typically went through during the three-day modules. Usually, the second day had an *"unexpected turning point"* and a *"personal challenge through this (…) dialogical, this personal language"* which was experienced to be *"strenuous"*, a *"paradigm shift"* and made her feel *"bewildered"* and *"vulnerable",* followed by a third day which brought her *"calm"* again and a careful attitude (*"OK, we do it very slowly, right?")* (Julia, Pos. 33). Thus, these educators who depicted the EMS modules as transformational for themselves also mentioned that they participated in a way which allowed them to be transformed and which was tied to a particular effort of learning to take care of oneself, of working on oneself, gaining insight into own patterns, and not avoiding feelings of vulnerability.

Hence, learning to balance her own expectations of herself with compassion became a base for Franziska to also be compassionate with her students when they felt desperate and under

high pressure – as illustrated in Example D. Thus, just like for many educators the stress-regulation in self and other were portrayed to be intertwined, so was in this and other examples the degree of compassion. Over the course of the interview, Franziska characterized both herself and the desperate boy in her class as "perfectionistic": *"He is totally perfectionistic, he always wants to make everything in the best way, but [in this moment] he didn't succeed."* Furthermore, describing how she provided the boy with *"more relief"* and supported him in regulating his emotions, Franziska used the same expression as for her own self-compassion: *"allowing myself to stop"* and *"allowing the time for him and for myself, to give enough time to feel into this."* In her phrasing, the lived *"allowing"* infused the field between herself and the student with a generous quality – a gift of time and acceptance – as opposed to the scarce commodities of time and positive regard implied in perfectionism and pressure. Feeling generosity and acceptance with herself during the module and anchoring it in herself *"opened the lock,"* making these qualities available in relation to her student. Similarly, Linda spoke of striking a balance between her professional expectations and accepting herself and the students. In the EMS training she felt *"allowed to have a focus on myself"* (Linda, Pos. 11) and could develop a more relaxed and accepting stance within herself *"which took a lot of pressure off."* Linda also mentioned how her high pedagogical expectations sometimes created a contracted and defensive atmosphere for herself and the students, in which her own risk of feeling *"like having failed as an educator"* transmitted itself as pressure to the students. As outlined in the prior theme, Linda's reflections on the EMS training described it as a cultivation of acceptance. Here, it must be noted that this cultivation process was portrayed to simultaneously include herself, too: *"to experience that I do not have to change myself nor the child. But that I must change this relationship."* Linda spoke of this as the core insight she gained in the EMS training. She portrayed this quality of as reciprocal and regarded it as the necessary base for education: *"Even if you do things I may not like, I certainly do things that you do not like, too' [laughing]. And to be able to work with it nevertheless."* (Linda, Pos. 509)

It should be made clear that this acceptance is not the same as resignation, nor does it mean a laissez-faire kind of leadership. As Linda outlined, the boy still should learn the rules, but she was able to apply them *"more flexibly."* Even though he showed difficulties of being still in class, he was still treated as a legitimate other. One can think of this kind of acceptance as a propagating or contagious field quality: The teacher accepted herself with her needs – what was important for her to carry on with the lesson – and the boy with his needs or difficulties – causing him to continue to "disturb" the lesson. The situation certainly contained a *"good tension"* which from that stance, got infused with or held by acceptance.

Similarly, Jill outlined a conflict with a student with a very difficult family background showed up late in her afterschool support class and in an angry mood. Later he told her he was angry because he had to come to the lesson and could not play football. Jill stressed that the conflict could be held within a quality of acceptance and the *"feeling of being on eye level"*:

> *"'I want something, I also want something. Well, okay. I did not get what I wanted.*
> *And so did you not get what you wanted. And now both of us got nothing. That's*

stupid, right?' But I had this feeling, well of contact. How can I describe it? […] He did approach me and tell me about it." (Jill, Pos. 103)

Jill further stressed that she appreciated it when children address if something is off for them.

"Because then you can deal with it." By contrast, when such an issue "dissipates […] then it can simply show up again on the next occasion when something similar happens. But it has not been worked with. And you think: 'Hey, that's again what it was like two weeks ago.' And then something builds up somehow. And in this moment, I appreciated that he addressed it and therefore, it was on the table." (Jill, Pos. 103-114)

The last point mentioned by Jill was also alluded to by other educators: The quality of acceptance contributes to relationships which are somewhat transparent, more accurate, where *"one has better access"* to the students and the solutions one finds are more sustainable.

Concluding, the educators spoke about realizing themselves as impacting their relationships, implying the necessity to take care of their own needs and feelings with a generous quality of compassion. Here, EMS was described to invoke experiences of positive qualities, such as compassion, acceptance, generosity, which were embodied and lived both intra- and interpersonally and played a crucial role in several field shift examples. The way the educators learned to "look after" themselves became a ground for co-regulating students' arousal and meeting them more compassionately. Crucially, this theme thereby highlighted that an important ingredient for enacting more attuned relationships to students was a shift for educators towards compassion with their own SELF (see Figure 20 below).

5.3.6. "Taking Responsibility": Shaping Relationships Through Communicating Coherently

This theme was constructed with a focus on educators' reflections on *"taking responsibility"* – a phrase which was part of the EMS language – for the quality of their relationships and putting this into practice by shifting their communication with students in ways that seemed to foster the coherence both within and between self and other. This theme builds on the themes on attunement and self-compassion which both belong to the range of deliberate efforts described by educators as important ways of taking responsibility for the relational quality.

Firstly, the educators' reflections on this matter were tied to a conceptual shift in understanding the importance of relationships in their profession which they saw being fostered by the EMS training:

"My view has changed. Firstly, on my […] profession […] It has changed my view so that I do not have the task to change the child […] but to, well, yes, look at my relationship to the child, that I try to stabilize it, so that I can better reach the child through this relationship. And this way, by itself, change emerges." (Linda, Pos. 151-155)

Linda's quote expresses four important aspects about her shifted professional understanding: Firstly, relationships are central for education. Secondly, one can become aware of them. Thirdly, they do not just happen, but they can be shaped. And, fourthly, it is the educator's *"task"* to shape them. Hence, this understanding fostered the motivation to proactively shape the quality of their relationships to students. Importantly, Linda highlighted that the EMS training thus helped her clarify and make sense of something which throughout her career had only been a vague idea:

> *"I have never seen this focus on the relational level. In all my professional years, no one has made it so clear. [...] I knew this wonderful phrase: 'education through attachment' ['Bildung durch Bindung', in German]. [...] But to consider this more consistently and to understand: How does this attachment come about? And why does education emerge from it? It became much clearer and more understandable for me. And palpable."* (Linda, Pos. 503)

Thus, according to Linda, the EMS training helped bridging a widespread knowing-doing gap in education by spelling out *"consistently"* what otherwise remained a *"wonderful phrase"*, namely, what it actually takes to establish relationships that enable and promote students' learning. The educators reflected on this different understanding of relationships not just as a conceptual shift, but in terms of actual awareness of feeling and sensing their relationships with students. Here, the educators pointed to a "bond" which can have different qualities such as being rigid, or flexible or warm. As Rhia elucidated in a preinterview:

> *"Yes, there is an invisible bond, which gets verified with a brief glance or a brief smile, but that is, well, I simply feel a certain connectedness to single students. And that has developed. There have been conversations, glances, proofs of trust, which have turned it into the bond it is now."* (Rhia_A_preinterview_teacher, Pos. 82)

The emphasis that one can shape this "bond" was expressed in various ways. Linda used the expressions *"to look at my relationship"* and *"to stabilize it."* Others spoke of *"being with"* (*"through this EMS view I gave myself the chance to go more into it [...] and to be more with the child [...] A chance that I care to enter more fully and nevertheless be more with the child"*, Franziska, Pos. 33)) or of *"getting into contact"* with a child. See also the theme on attuning to others for more examples.

Hence, the educators spoke of learning to take responsibility in terms of a shift in the understanding of their own professional role, emphasizing relationships, and of being aware of the quality of their relationships – or the "bond" to students.

In the following, it will be outlined how the educators depicted putting these shifts in understanding, motivation, and awareness into practice in their communication with students and parents. Generally, as mentioned, the previous themes have in many ways alluded to the educators' ways of taking care of their relational bonds, in particular the theme on attunement to others' needs which can be conceived of as an outflow of this very understanding.

However, the educators also spoke about crucial shifts in situations that required more than attunement. In one of them, Linda spoke of a pattern of interaction with a student who was noisy and chatting during class. Habitually, she used to discipline the student, and both were caught in an aversive interaction loop. The emotional tone in which Linda habitually spoke with the student was marked by her reactivity, feeling irritated and taking his behavior personal, shouting at him *"stop it now!" Reflecting* on her relationship with the student in the EMS training, Linda learned a new way of expressing herself to the boy without devaluing him. She spoke with him in an emotional tone which she portrayed as calmer, less reactive, and more collaborative: *"Now I try to tell the child: 'Look, I can stand this for a while. But then the point will be reached when it is too much for me. And then it disturbs me […] 'Now you have to stop it.'"* Comparing these two expressions shows that she characterized the first one as a command, the second as a way of showing to the other the effect that his behavior has on her, as well as her willingness to tolerate it some degree and the limits of thereof. Furthermore, the affective tone of irritation and anger was not present in Linda's portrayal of the second expression.

In addition, Linda highlighted another important shift: *"I … don't focus on him, but I say: 'It is disturbing me. Now I am disturbed.' […] 'Now you have to stop it.'"* (Linda, Pos. 118-124) Hence, Linda expressed herself in a way which 'owned' her own feelings and needs and showed them to the student. Similarly, in another example, Julia illustrated the inner speech of "owning" her emotions in a conflict with a student: *"'Okay, this [irritation] is within me. I leave it within me. But I will make it totally clear what I need here now.'"* Noticing, owning, and regulating their emotions, both were able to express themselves without 'discharging' their emotion onto the other. Julia characterized this novel quality of her expressions as *"de-emotionalized."* Like Linda who revealed to the students her personal boundary (when it was too loud for her), Julia expressed her limitations (*"You have noticed that I try to calm things down here. I can't do it like this. I simply need you to be calm." "Go to your place."*). Thus, without being emotionally reactive, these expressions were nevertheless more personal, anchored in their own appraisal of the situation, and revealing something about them. Hence, instead of commanding or disciplining the students, they expressing their responsibility for what they personally and professionally needed in the situation. Accordingly, Julia described her way of speaking with the boy as *"rather like a plea to him, because otherwise I would not be able to [teach],"* instead of commanding *"it must be quiet."* In a nutshell, rather than setting a boundary to the student, the educators showed their own personal boundary and asked the student to respect this. Thus, the boundary originated not from an impersonal code of conduct in classrooms, but from the educators' self-respect of their needs.

Apparently, this was more understandable for these students. In both examples, the students were reported to respond in collaborative and positive ways – which were unexpected and contrary to the educators' histories of habitual struggles with these students (*"and the child simply accepted it."*) Notably, showing own limitations was also reported to help create more collaborative relationships and less power struggles with parents, as in examples G and H.

The educators attributed the students' collaborative responses to the fact that they had spoken about themselves (*"It was like a relief for him. It was not about him. It was about me." "It is my impression that he is better able to accept it, because I speak about myself."*) The

shift in expression was indicated by using the first-person singular pronoun, requiring a willingness to take responsibility for own needs and emotions. Thereby, the educators were able to counter the ubiquitous adverse patterns of interactions such as objectifying the other as "disturbance", making them responsible for one's own distress and its regulation. Moreover, Maria highlighted the necessity of disrupting the habitual time pressure in order to begin speaking about oneself:

> "Due to the lack of time, one is quickly at solving it quickly [sic] and the shortest way is simply […] one does not say 'I would like' and 'I want that', but 'you'. […] One says it anyhow. And that is not so good." (Maria, Pos. 14)

Furthermore, taking responsibility implied that the educators showed up in these situations with agency and attuned leadership – not just regarding their own needs, but whatever the situation demanded. In the same change moment example mentioned earlier, Julia depicted the shift from habitually making child responsible towards taking on that responsibility herself. *"It had always been like this, that I handed it over to him, this [claps] change something now!"* Her habitual way of dealing with the situation had been marked by asking the child what he needed. In EMS she learned that *"it gives too much responsibility to the children."* Thus, she took the lead by expressing herself clearly in simple statements instead of many questions. Leadership was not only relevant when confronted with student behaviors which were experienced as disturbance. Even helping a child regulate his emotions was described to require such leadership. Take for instance Example D in which Franziska applied herself to this task and creatively sought out solutions for the boy which had previously been beyond her grasp, e.g., letting him leave the room. The more she engaged in this attuned leadership, the easier it became for the boy to respond and go along. Like Julia, Franziska switched during this situation from asking the boy questions *("'Is it that you can't do it now?'")* to voicing her impressions of him and offering a clear suggestion *("'Look, I notice you can't do this. Right?' And he replied 'hm'. 'Do you need a break?' 'Hmm.')* Hanna illustrated in Example H that this leadership might very well be geared towards creating the working conditions oneself needs right now.

In addition, another crucial aspect mentioned by virtually all educators was that the EMS training helped them to listening more actively and attentively. Thus, they learned that listening and making room for the other to express his or her viewpoint fully was an active strategy to lead more productive conversations. For instance, an educator in a focus group illustrated how she suspended the impulse to justify herself when a father complained about how his child was treated at school and instead made room to listen to him:

> "And I said nothing. I believe many people expect a teacher to justify him or herself. But I did not do it. I just looked at him […] Then he told me more and even more and it was not until he had not said anything else for a while and I had the feeling, NOW he could get rid of everything, that I joined in. And it was a GOOD conversation. We parted on good terms. […] At same point he himself arrived at a good solution and I did not do much." (Focus Group 1, Pos. 56-65)

So far, it has been outlined that the educators spoke of taking responsibility for their relationships by noticing, owning, and regulating their emotions, by clearly taking charge of

their own needs and the situational demands, and by expressing themselves in ways that were neither discharging negative emotions nor devaluing the other as well as by listening to the other. Hence, the factors described in the previous themes – self-care and -regulation and a release of a negative view of the other along with attunement to other's needs – were prerequisites for enacting these desired shifts in their interactions with students.

Conversely, where these factors were lacking, the educators spoke of this failure as not living up to their values or professional standards and impairing their sense of coherence. In particular, they highlighted acting out their own emotional irritability on the students. For instance, Rolf reflected on such an occasion:

> "Well usually I find this not so nice. [...] Well, I just think: 'Rolf, what kind of a mess are you creating here' And this does not feel good at all. [...] I do not live up to my expectation of myself as an educator." (Rolf, Pos. 233)

Along those lines, Maria too mentioned that her emotional reactivity prevented her from acting professionally: *"I have failed, and I want to justify myself [...] and I am lacking this [...] lead of the conversation, [...] working professionally. [...] I lose sight of the essential, what it was actually about."* (Maria, Pos. 263) Similarly, Franziska reflected in hindsight that the emotional reactivity which was brought up in her by a student's behaviors prevented her from finding the balance between authenticity and professionality:

> "There it is again, this discrepancy between professionality and emotionality. Well, of course I should be authentic. [...] As a teacher I try to be authentic, but nevertheless professional. And in this situation, this has not worked out at all. [...] Because of this strong personal sense of injustice, which I carry deep within me, [...] it is so big that in this moment I see in hindsight, that I interrupted the contact to him [the student]. [...] For me, I made a cut." (Franziska, Pos. 123)

Later she concluded that in this situation, she was the one who cut her bond to the boy *"And this is my responsibility."* Taking responsibility hinged on a regulating one's emotions and was impeded when the educators felt incapable of it. These failures were experienced as a conflictive incoherence with their values.

In contrast, when the educators felt able to take responsibility, they brought their professional values, their own needs, their expressions, and actions into coherence, thereby enacting an integrative shift in the relationship. They increased the coherence between the implicit and explicit side of their expressions, causing less confusion and distress in students and facilitating their collaboration. In short, greater coherence in educators fostered coherence and integration in the field, comprising a feeling of connection between educators and students along with a greater flexibility and tolerance of different needs.

To conclude with, this theme has focused on these educators' learning processes in EMS about taking responsibility for their relationships to students in alignment with their professional values. Educators' responsibility for own emotions and needs was crucial for the process, enabling the expression of their boundaries and leadership of the situational demands. Thereby, educators avoided declining the relational quality by acting out irritability as well as by disciplining, commanding, and devaluing students. Hence, relationships were

portrayed to grow in connection and flexibility. Summing up, the theme centered how the educators learned to communicate in ways that shaped more stable, coherent, and attuned RELATIONSHIPS (see Figure 20 below for an overview of themes).

5.3.7. "Like a Bunch of Flowers": Seeing Something You Like in the Child and Feeling Something You Like in Yourself

This theme centers the ways in which the educators experienced the moments of change as gratifying. The educators spoke about seeing and sensing positive effects both in the students and in their relationships to them as well as in themselves.

In terms of students' behaviors, the educators perceived a range of positive outcomes, such as a more focused, attentive, or relaxed atmosphere in a classroom as well as individual students' learning to regulate their emotions better, and, hence, being able to participate in the lesson, and improving their academic performance (e.g., *"he has made a huge progress"*), in relation to parents, collaborative instead of aggressive and escalating parent meetings were mentioned (e.g*., "TOTALLY comprehensive, eye-level conversation."*

Regarding their relationship with students, the educators spoke of *"getting into contact"* where this had been lacking before, of establishing a *"trusting relationship",* or of shifting the quality of a relationship in a positive direction, such as from being rigid or negative to being more flexible and rewarding. See for instance Julia's example of a boy she had never felt like having a connection to. When she approached him in this new way outlined in the theme above, the boy nodded, uttered his agreement ("*Well, okay*"), and went to his place. Seeing that the boy *"could accept this",* left Julia thinking *"Okay, this was the contact I never had before"* and feeling *"like a bunch of flowers"* with *"a bubbly feeling of bliss."* Similarly, Linda experienced a shift in her relationship with the students outlined in the theme above, feeling more relaxed, at ease herself, and appreciating the student more for "*who he is."* Furthermore, she was able to see that the student in fact was willing to cooperate with her rules, and that the quality of their relationship became more accepting of each other and flexible in handling their different needs. In this example as well as in others, the relief from re-enacting a stressful habitual interaction loop might be regarded as another rewarding aspect. A curious example was provided by Hanna who spoke about a *"magic moment"* working in an EMS module during a dialogue practice on a situation when a boy with autism in her class had a fit – which he regularly did. She mentioned that after this module *"over months, this child did not throw any tantrum."* Hanna wondered whether this could be attributed to her work during the module and reasoned that it might have resulted from her relaxation. The next incident with the boy occurred in a situation when Hanna felt more stressed again.

Sometimes, the educators reported a sequence of felt successes during a change moment. For instance, while supporting a boy regulate his emotions, Franziska's first success was her capacity to stop herself and thereby, getting in touch with the boy. *"Then I was so happy that I managed to stop […] And that was I think already a huge success."*

The second success comprised seeing the boy return in a more balanced state back to the class and realizing that her intervention worked out for him in the desired way which invited

in her the arising of positive affect. The third was a positive affective connection with the (*"a warm bond"*) and seeing the boy's new capacity and trust to signal to her when he is overwhelmed – along with a feeling of having *"better access"* to him. Franziska summarized her experience:

> *"In a training, […] it is all rosy theory and so on. But I simply […] experienced it and it was successful, and it created more relationship […] To enter into an intensive relationship when you see the children only once a week is really very difficult. It was a special education class and when you have a child that does not respond like the others. And then you do something that works, and apparently does good to the child: He came back inside and […] participated in the lesson. And I had the feeling, it helped him over the following weeks. […] I was happy each time I saw him. […] We had a different connection."* (Franziska, Pos. 85)

Another underlying thread is that the educators experience themselves as valuable for their students. Linda outlined how it moved her when she realized that her student who had lots of difficulties in school was trying to establish a relationship with her. It meant for her *"a big piece of responsibility, but also joy"* and that he chose her personally as someone to contact felt *"incredibly beautiful."*

The educators spoke of another important outcome of these positive shifts in terms of a growing relational and pedagogical self-efficacy. They experienced themselves as capable of relating to students in ways which were a positive contribution for their well-being, academic and social-emotional learning, and as able to create a successful collaboration with parents. As expressed by Franziska in the quote above – doing *"something that works"* and does *"good to the child."* Hanna for instance expressed her confidence and pride about being able to lead successful conversations even with angry fathers, which she attributes to EMS: *"I think I would not have been able to solve it so well [without EMS] […]. In this situation I think: It is really quite something, that I encountered this aggressive person in a really very relaxed way and I felt safe. 'I sit down now comfortably, and we will manage that.'"* Relatedly, the relational self-efficacy also enabled the educators to feel more successful in their profession, in terms of providing pedagogical support for the students in a way that actually benefitted them. Some mentioned *"Better access"*, and *"a more accurate perception"* of students. For instance, Linda outlined: *"This relationship has improved so much and […] through the connection we now have, I have the sense that I can transmit much more to him."* She further outlined how she learned to adapt her pedagogical strategy in a more attuned way to the students' current level of development and thereby *"better accompany him […] and support him."*

Furthermore, some themes have treated intrinsically positive experiences, such as self-regulating negative emotions or stress, calming down, and meeting self and other with compassion. In addition, living up to one's own values of empathy with and to one's professional responsibility for the relational quality was another gratifying factor.

Summing up, the educators mentioned several gratifying aspects of the change moments, foremost, positive changes in their relationships with students as well as in themselves and in students. Hence, this theme has pointed to virtuous cycles in the implementation. Here,

educators' successes in implementing positive change were gratifying for them, establishing a positive feedback loop, contributing to their MOTIVATION TO CONTINUE (see Figure 20).

5.3.8. Summary of Themes

Summing up, the themes above have outlined the generic features of these educators' learning process about the relational level in the EMS training and the way it was put into practice during the change moments, i.e., how the learnings from the EMS training were implemented on a micro-level in interactions with students and parents. This process entailed seeing one's habit (1), and the current situation (2) in a different light, of enacting a break of habits (3) – such as a habitual task-orientation – which gave room to sensing and attuning to the other (4) as well as to oneself (5), and, consequently, of shaping and transforming the relationship between self and other (6) in ways which lead to the motivation to continue (7). Figure 20 presents a map of the constructed themes. As the numbers indicate, the themes 1 – 7 might be regarded as thresholds, which these educator' reflected on as subprocesses in cultivating relational competence and transforming social fields.
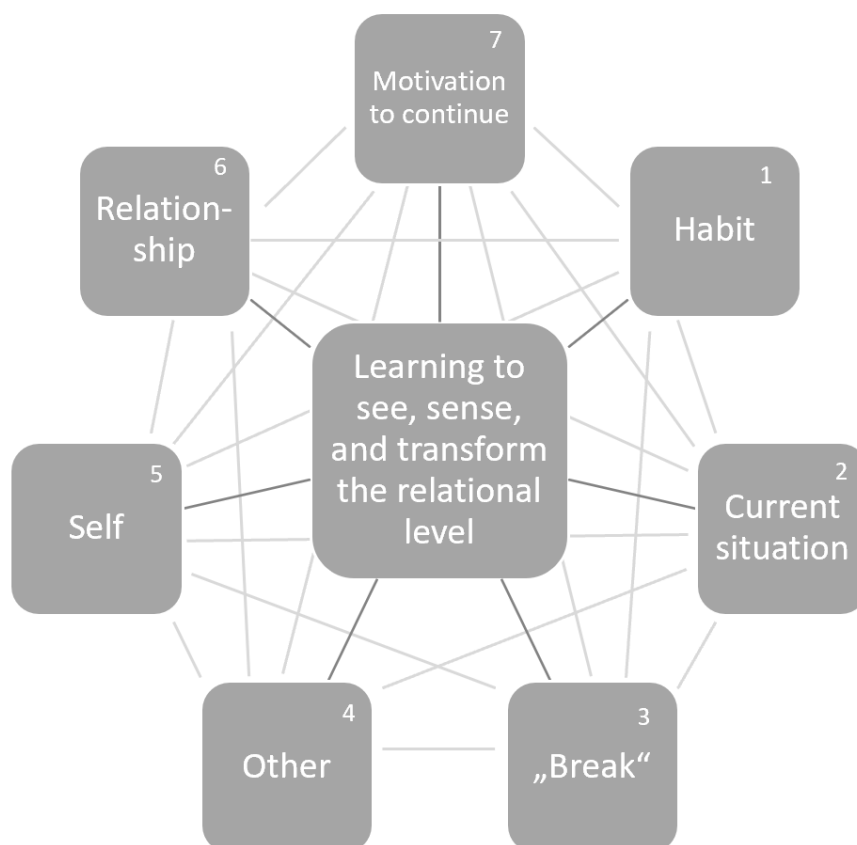
Figure 20: Thematic map

The sequential and mutually interactive character of the processes is illustrated in the thematic map and importantly the motivation to continue (7 in Figure 20) represents the possibility for a future 'break'. In this way, Figure 20 represents self-sustaining and iterative processes, with all elements connected.

5.4. Social Field Shifts (Meso-Level)

There are several examples of how each school's social field was in the process of being changed, but also examples of how difficult this development can be. The following themes address the different degrees of malleability in the social fields as described by leaders and educators during EMS. These results have been published in an article on social field shifts (Herrmann 2023) as part of this thesis.

Some of the de-generative patterns of interactions in a field were portrayed as malleable, serving as starting points for the development of the faculty climate. Others appeared to be transient indicators of the change process itself, while still others were found to be persistent and particularly challenging to address. Overall, these examples demonstrate that the persistence of autonomous patterns varies between social fields.

5.4.1. Shifts and Stabilities in Social Field Autonomy

The major theme is exemplified under three subthemes which each stem from one of the schools, formulated with a quote from a school leader:

1) "It costs a lot of sweat to find togetherness"
2) "We are well on our way on this change process"
3) "Constantly under attack"

1) *"It Cost Us a Lot of Sweat to Find Togetherness": Malleable Autonomy*

The first example concerns a faculty's social field characterized by contagious negative affect that turned out to be malleable over the course of 1.5 years.

Pre-training: Contagious Negative Affect and Cynicism

The leaders' impression of the pre-training faculty climate was that generally, faculty members were engaged and motivated and supporting each other. However, the positive atmosphere was also portrayed as unstable, at times giving rise to strong negative affectivity and, particularly, polarizing cynicism. The leaders describe how they had over a period of several years worked on the social field, shifting it from initial mistrust *("no one believes me", "cloud of distrust")* into more of *"a trusting atmosphere."* Before the school started EMS, leaders were *"completely shocked"* that some faculty members began to again demonstrate harsh negativity and cynicism:

"We were completely shocked as we noticed […] that old behaviors break free of which we had thought: … It cost us a lot of sweat to find a certain culture and togetherness." (Leader_B_1, Pos. 76-78)

The negative affectivity of a few educators was described to impact on the whole field propagating negative affect and polarization and impeding collaboration among colleagues, because many educators were scared of the *"strong"* and *"loud"* criticism. Additionally, the leaders also felt attacked (*"every sentence implies pointing the finger."* Hence, the display of strong negativity invited a tense and charged bodily and affective responsivity of fear or aggression in the interactors. This tense responsivity shaped their "spontaneous" reactions which thereby further propagated the negativity. Thereby, the social field's autonomy propagated phenomena like negative affectivity and cynicism by coupling the expression of negativity with 'catching' it in a mutually reinforcing pattern. It is noteworthy to point out that the pattern was described to propagate further, affecting the social fields in the classroom (*"This mood … gets transferred, and this stance towards children."*) and causing educators to be more reactive towards children and take their behavior personally (*"hence, one also doesn't agree with the students. […] 'They are now also doing all this to annoy me.")* Importantly, the leaders conceived this pattern not as a predominant feature of the social field but as a transient phenomenon.

Shift from Affect Contagion to Embodied Presence

After 1.5 years (post-training), the leaders highlighted that the educators who earlier had demonstrated strong negativity continued doing so, and they had not participated in the EMS program's first cohort. However, the impact of their negativity on the whole field was mitigated. While before EMS, the leaders portrayed the negativity to propagate, after the training they described it as *"curbed."* Additionally, the educators demonstrating the negativity were described to *"somehow get carried along and held"* by their colleagues. Hence, this illustrates how a malleable autonomous pattern can be shifted through an intervention like EMS.

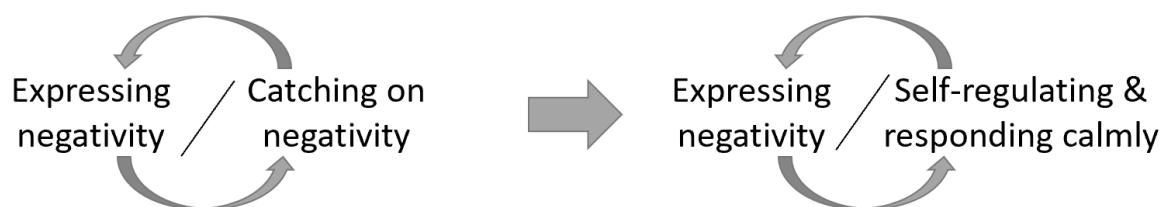Figure 21: Field shift from contagious to composed

The reflections by leaders and educators indicate that a key to changing the field's autonomy was the increased relational awareness of the affordances that reinforced the pattern, and the ability to shape a different response to them. The leaders described this shift in the educators' response as a more grounded and balanced attitude: *"They are grounded,"* do not

react *"immediately to everything,"* but first let things *"sink in."* Congruently, two of the interviewed educators explicitly spoke of disentangling from other's negativity, greater centeredness, and self-regulating capacity:

> *"When I look after myself, then the quality of the relationship changes. And that does not only concern the children here at school, it concerns my colleagues, too. [...] When I take a breath [breathes out], things are never as bad as they seem."* (Franziska, Pos. 150)

Here, the educator employed a German saying to illustrate the new attitude [literally: 'You don't eat things as hot as you cook them'] pointing to equanimity in the face of others' excessively negative appraisal or emotionality.

Additionally, the leaders illustrated how they learned in the EMS training to respond to the affordance of others' negativity by consciously grounding themselves, so that consequently, the affordance *"did not cause me to react in such a confused and so-to-say spontaneous way. Instead, I could calm down, recollect what was significant for me and report that back. I was not affected by it."*

Like the educator, the leader highlighted the use of breathing to self-regulate the bodily and affective charge that was evoked by the field affordance:

> *"I had somehow a couple of seconds for myself. I can only describe it with [...] 'Vmmmm' [interviewee breathes out slowly and makes a downward movement with the hand in front of the body] [...] Getting a posture, and standing facing the person."* (Leader_B_3, Pos. 37)

The bodily gesture used by the leader is an illustrative Example Hor the field's embodied quality. Since autonomous patterns are based on interbodily resonance, shifting the field has an embodied quality to it. Bringing 'relational awareness' to the felt bodily resonance that gets evoked by the field enhances the degrees of freedom of responding to it. This is a key mechanism for shifting social fields. In this case, it allowed the school leader to talk to the educator and set boundaries *"without bursting out against her. [...] Before [EMS], I had not been able to do this."*

Summing up, the dynamic in this faculty is an illustration for an autonomous pattern in a social field that is malleable and can be transformed by shifting the response to its corresponding affordance. Thereby, the actors increased their degrees of freedom to respond. While the field previously propagated negativity, the educators' relational awareness co-shaped a more conscious and centered quality in the social field that was able to *"hold"* the negativity. The shift's morphology can be compared to water condensing from steam to liquid. By becoming aware of the felt responsivity and breathing into the tense thundercloud of affect contagion, it condensed like rain drops.

Shift from Cynicism to Compassion

Alongside the transformation of negativity, educators described a shift in the social field from cynicism towards shared compassion exemplifying once again that certain autonomous

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patterns are malleable under the right conditions. Here, the shift affected the way in which vulnerability was dealt with within the social field. An educator mentioned that prior to EMS, the social field reinforced a cynical attitude *("a grim sense of humor")* as a way of creating distance from emotional and vulnerable aspects of school life. This was described to shift towards greater connectedness and *"trust"* among the educators. Listening compassionately to colleagues' vulnerability invited a new, virtuous loop in the field, coupling the display of vulnerability with compassion. For example, an educator mentioned that *"the tone among us"* shifted in the sense that *"one listens more carefully and also watches the nonverbal language."*
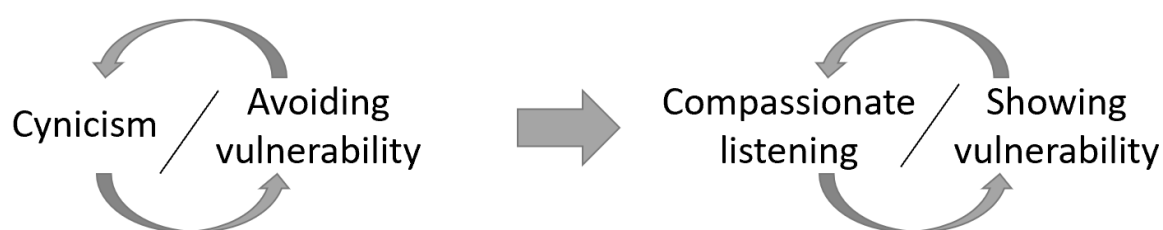
Figure 22. Field shift from cynical to compassionate

Two of the educators mentioned experiences during EMS when they became aware of their colleagues' vulnerability, and one of them explicitly attributed the more sensitive atmosphere to this experience. Particularly, he reflected on how it changed the way he saw his colleagues:

> *"What is certain is that every colleague probably has something like that [vulnerability], and it sits within everyone. Hence, one approaches certain things with more sensitivity."* (Rolf, Pos. 110)

The quote illustrates how the field's affordance changed. Previously, it invited the actors to collectively contract and harden themselves against their own and each other's vulnerabilities through cynicism. Now, it invited to soften, letting self and other appear more personally, including vulnerable sides, and, consequently, feeling more closely connected with each other.

The school leaders elucidated that the shift was tangible (*"You feel it. It is like a bond"*) yet difficult to describe (*"These are vibrations and hard to put into words."*) Interestingly, when inquiring further into its phenomenology, they described it as a field (*"nonverbal wave, a nonverbal web, a knowing bond"*) that supported their work:

> *"It's like a dovetailed network which, in its wave-like form, possibly made us here more flexible. So that we could respond very differently to certain situations."* (Leader_B_3, Pos. 47)

Given that neither EMS nor the interview process *explicitly* introduced the concept of a social field, this is a remarkable finding, suggesting that field awareness is indeed a natural capacity (Brabant & DiPerna, 2016).

2) *"We are well on our way in this change process, not yet in the middle of it. Maybe in the first third of it": Unfreezing Autonomy*

Pre-training: Appreciative Atmosphere, but Under-differentiated

The second Example Doncerns a pattern within a school's social field in which leaders and educators emphasized the positive atmosphere and collective efficacy, but where conflict was avoided: *"there are many that think together, … and manage things together."* Congruently, educators portrayed the faculty as *"very, very friendly among each other and very helpful"*, and as *"a pleasant faculty which together masters many challenges."*

However, alongside the positive atmosphere, the leaders mentioned issues such as the challenge to *"clearly name the expectations"* with *"a clarity that one is the leader"* and to initiate difficult conversations. A statement by the leaders concerning their *"favorite phrase"* at school illustrates the pattern. The phrase was *"Here we don't talk like this. […] Not with parents, not with children, not with one another."* On the one hand, the phrase was meant to be a reminder of the obligation to communicate in an appreciative manner (a core value for these leaders). On the other hand, however, it may also discourage transparency about conflictive views and difficult truths. The phrase can be seen as an expression of an autonomous pattern in the field, emphasizing appreciation and 'inviting' conflict avoidance. Accordingly, the co-principal mentioned suspicion that things may appear *"to be rosy that in fact are not rosy … Possibly, it is not the way one thinks."* Using Siegel's (2020) concept of 'integration', the social field autonomy overemphasized linkage among the members of the field at the cost of their differentiation from each other, and hence, causing homogenization of expression and a reduced capacity to deal constructively with their differences.

Pattern "Shaken up"

The developments in the faculty during EMS interfered with the social field's pattern of creating cohesion. The leader contended: *"I believe that [EMS] has shaken things up"* and *"redefined the word relationship in school. But the […] new definition has not yet been written down for me up until now."* The quote indicates that changing persistent autonomous patterns can require a wide time frame. Particularly, cultivating a social field's 'integration' is easier said than done, requiring holding, and acknowledging conflictive views and learning to create belonging without jeopardizing individual differences.

The interviewees from this school continued to emphasize the faculty's generally positive atmosphere. However, the image of homogeneity got questioned and de-constructed in various degrees. For example, the leaders mentioned difficult confrontations with their faculty: *"I was standing there and thought: Is this still our faculty? […] Where are our people, our nice people?"* Describing the confrontation, the leaders tweaked their *"favorite phrase"* in

a way that may be indicative for the trajectory of the field's shifting autonomy: *"This is simply not how we talk to each other. And also not to me, right? … I don't think it's nice, when one talks to me like that."* Congruent with this shift from 'we' to 'I', an educator described how faculty members' differences from each other were revealed due to EMS:

> *"Because all had thought: 'We are all SO similar.' And we are not. And this has been revealed now. […] In fact, all had thought […] MANY – of course not everyone – that it is a big homogenous mass. […] This is noticeable in faculty conferences. Everyone is convinced about being able to speak for everyone else. They do not speak about themselves. They always speak for ALL others at the same time. And everyone else is nodding, too. And now it has become clear: 'No, […] we do not think all the same, right?' And I see this is as big advantage, but at the moment it feels like a disappointment. […] like a detected fraud." (Julia, Pos. 440-452)*

The longer passage illustrates the high degree to which the faculty's social field had been shaped by a tendency to homogenize, indicating this pattern's persistence. Additionally, it demonstrates that once a deeply ingrained pattern shifts, it may stir up an emotional reaction such as disappointment. This is not an easy process. Since the field's autonomy shapes the affective resonance between the actors, to some degree, it channels and binds the actors' emotions along with their needs to belong or to discern themselves as individuals. Shifting a pattern then may release the affective charge previously bound up in the pattern.

Shift from Belonging Through Homogeneity to Integration

For example, the leaders spoke of a supervision during EMS that, in providing such a 'holding space' for a portion of the faculty, facilitated the social field's integration. The effects of the supervision were described primarily on an affective level:

> *"One goes in[to the supervision] with aggression, with grudge, […] And you leave and it is different. It flows into a positive thought, that I want to work again with these people. FEEL like collaborating with them again." (Leader_A_3, Pos. 313)*

Reflecting further on the effects, the leaders contended that the social field between the conflict parties felt *"solid"* again (*"I did not worry 'Oh, what will happen now again?' But I really felt that this is solid."* This impression of solidity was associated with the field's integration, specifically, the perception of the conflict parties' increased ability to acknowledge and give voice to differences and challenges early on before they escalated into severe conflict (*"name it … when something is off, so that we don't even reach that [claps both hands]"*). This demonstrates that a persistent autonomous pattern in a social field can still be altered for a portion of the field, given an appropriate 'holding space' like a supervision setting.
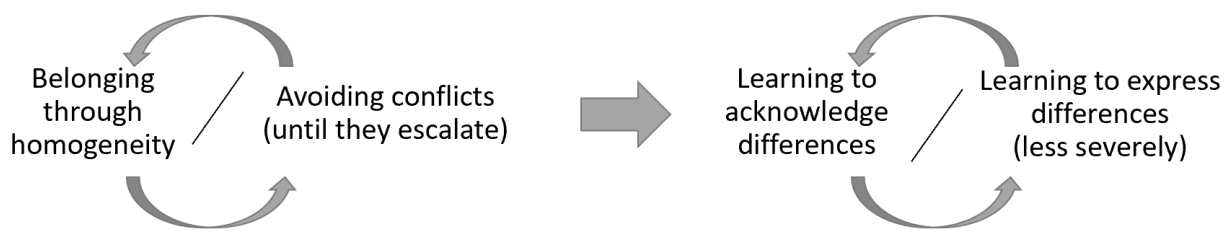
Figure 23: Field shift from homogenous to integrative

3) *"Constantly Under Attack": Persistent Autonomy*

Pre-training: Blaming and Defending

This school's example was formulated to account for the leaders' and educators' reflections on a pattern of blaming and defending exhibited by individual and collective actors which was perceived to persist over time despite EMS.

> *"The relationship between teachers, educators and social workers is often shaped by begrudging each other … between groups. Spiteful talking about each other, alleging the others were not working enough, respectively."* (Leader_C_1, Pos. 20-22)

Again, it must be noted that the leaders did not portray the social field to be entirely shaped by this pattern, but to also include a sense of *"common ground", "a "cool atmosphere"* which was *"fair and appreciative."* However, the blaming was deeply entrenched in the social field. Its persistence and intensity were exemplified by how widespread the pattern was, propagating within and beyond the faculty and leaders, also including the parents and other actors. Hence, one can say that this autonomous pattern has propagated and firmly established itself throughout the social field.

Leaders and faculty described its affordance as the risk to become a target of others' accusations. The affordance invited a "*defensive stance"* and *"behavior[s] of justification"* among the actors, a feeling of having to guard and defend oneself to counter possible attacks (*"In my role one is constantly under attack.")* The pattern impeded the actors' collaboration, bringing forth further reasons for blame.

Pattern Persists, Despite Attempts to Promote Change

The pattern of blaming and defending persisted despite EMS, as illuminated by the interviewee's reflections. The leader explicitly confirmed the statements made in this regard 1.5 years earlier in the previous interview (Leader_C_3, Pos. 27) at the offset of the program, indicating a lack of perceived change:

> *"I find it very tough how some people treat each other. [...] Then I think for myself: 'Oh, haven't you paid attention in EMS regarding appreciative communication [...]?" (Leader_C_3, Pos. 386)*

Congruently, an interviewed educator reported how the field affordance still invited in her a defensive stance *("[...] Do I have to justify myself?'")*

Two mechanisms were described through which the field's autonomy resisted being shifted. Firstly, it assimilated attempts to promote empathy. Specifically, the perceived low level of EMS commitment was taken up as a new material for mutual blame, feeding into the autonomous pattern of interaction. For example, the actors spoke about others showing *"avoidant behavior"* and lack of commitment, or of having *"pulled out of"* EMS. Secondly, the field's autonomy was described to over time alternate between periods of calm and of escalation, leading during escalation to a state of emergency that particularly impeded the capacity to learn and absorb any change impulses from EMS. An educator outlined:

> *"During the last module there were again many irritations concerning the whole school [...] There was a lot of resentment [...] This affected me: 'Oh my god, where will this lead to now?'[...] Actually, I want to do EMS and now my brain is busy with completely different things, it is occupied." (Jill, Pos. 41-42)*

To conclude with, this example shows the power of a social field's autonomy to resist change and keep reinforcing itself. Regarding EMS, it should not be read that the intervention had no effect on the social field between educators and children or parents, or even within 'pockets' of the faculty, but within the timespan of this study it did not affect this pattern at large in the faculty field. However, as outlined subsequently, there were also indications for the emergence of a new possibility in this social field.

Shift from Defending to Listening

The pattern exerted a strong pull on the actors to react in defensive ways. Nevertheless, examples were presented when it was possible to suspend the impulses and respond to blame with listening instead of justification. For example, the leader spoke about learning to respond differently to educators' dissatisfaction:

> *"it's not about explaining and justifying everything [...] but that the other nevertheless gets a chance to express this, and give a voice to his unwillingness, his disappointment, his sadness or [...] the alleged injustice."* (Leader_C_3, Pos. 144-151)
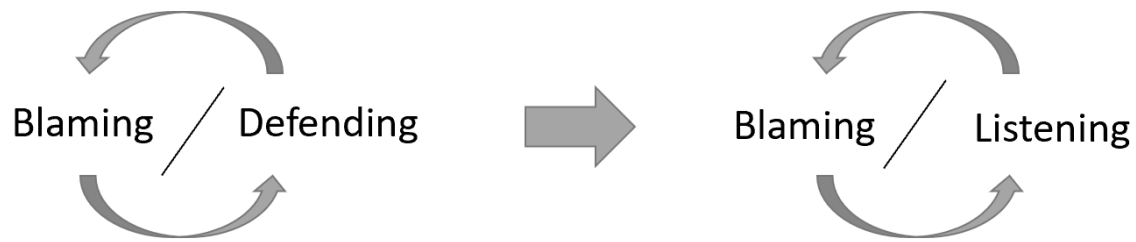
Figure 24: Field Shift from defensive to attentive

Here, the leader illustrated relational awareness of the evoked responsivity, in the form of impulses to justify and defend oneself, and of suspending them by means of feeling the body and breath. Thereby, the example illustrates the possibility of transmuting very persistent autonomous patterns at least momentarily.

5.4.2. Affective Spill-overs Between Meso and Micro

This theme was constructed across the three schools meso-level developments to highlight the school professional's reflections on "spill-over" effects, where pattern of interactions and the affective tone between leaders and faculty, or among the faculty, then spill over to the interaction with students. In terms of developments, the spillovers of pathologizing interactions and negative affect were portrayed to decrease as a function of growing self-regulation.

As articulated above, the development in one of the faculties was portrayed as a shift from emotional contagion to self-regulation. In this regard, the school leader pointed out that this pattern also used to spill over to the teacher-student relationships: *"This mood … gets transferred, and this stance, towards children."* The co-principal portrayed how in this process of emotional contagion, educators begin to take children's behavior personally: One doesn't agree with these colleagues, *"hence, one also doesn't agree with the students. … 'They are now also doing all this to annoy me. … They do this to annoy ME!' [knocking on the table]."*

The rejecting stance towards colleagues was described to be transferred to the interaction with students, where educators were more likely to take students' behavior personally and attribute a hostile intention to the students. Figure 25 (see below) depicts this phenomenon: A pattern or quality occurring in the interaction among faculty members (indicated by the round arrows between F and E) spills over to the interaction between educator and student (indicated by the round arrows between E and S). This transference is depicted by the grey arrows at the top of the figure, pointing from the field between E and F to the field between E and S.

Another spill-over was mentioned to occur from the interaction between members of the faculty and the leadership teams to students. This can be exemplified using one of the other

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schools described in theme 1, example 3, where a pattern of blaming and defensiveness was portrayed to be firmly established across systems levels. The defensive stance was not only limited to the leader and faculty level but was also precisely described to propagate to the interaction with students. Here, an educator spoke about being on guard during her work to avoid conflicts with the school leader over the topic of how to deal with certain challenging situations in relation to students. She described how during her interaction with a student with special needs who used to have sudden aggressive or self-damaging tantrums she was worrying that "*later on there will be a discussion [with the leader] whether I was behaving correctly or not.*" The educator was affected by the pattern of blaming and justifying, anticipating the need to justify herself ("*"Am I allowed to do this? Or do I have to justify myself?""*) in relation to the leader, adding to the challenge of responding to the student. Thus, we can see here that being caught in a pattern of blaming and justifying on the meso-level () impeded the quality of the educator-student interaction. In Figure 25, a grey arrow at the top indicates this spillover from a quality in the social field between leader and faculty (L and F) towards the social field between educator and student (E and S). This spillover was not isomorphic as in the previous example since the educator did not in turn blame the student. But nevertheless, the tensed up and defensive atmosphere propagated from meso to micro.

In addition, the school leader also spoke of instances where teachers were very "*hard on the students*" and how the leader in response took on the role of an "*advocate for many*" trying to defend the students being blamed or divert the blame by breaking the pattern "*with some humor.*" This was also illustrated in relation to parents during support conferences attended by the parents and a team of diverse staff members:

> "*The parents are being summoned and then sit there and of course these mechanisms emerge: Who accuses who of what? Who is guilty? And to get out of this cycle, I think this is an important thing for us. […] Often, the certainly burdened and exhausted teacher speaks about all the bad deeds of this boy for ten minutes and the father is shrinking and shrinking and at some point, he would also like to try and illuminate why his child is the way it is. And this is always a bad start for the conversation.*" (Leader_C_3, Pos. 405-413)

Thus, the pattern of blaming and defending was described to propagate to interactions between educators and students as well as with parents, extending to a triadic pattern of blaming, collapsing, and defending between the three involved parties of educators, parents, and the leader.

Regarding developments of these spillovers, self-regulation was highlighted as an antidote. For instance, the educator who was facing a student's tantrums spoke about working on her relationship with the student during an EMS module. After the module, these tantrums stopped. The educator expressed her surprise and appreciation for this incident (*"it was really such a magic moment"*) and speculated that her own increased self-regulation and relaxation may have prevented them. The EMS module "*must have changed something in me. […] Probably I was more relaxed. Because the next time he threw a tantrum, that was another situation in which I was generally very tense and exhausted.*" (Hanna, Pos. 113-115) Hence,

her capacity to regulate prevented the tense meso-level atmosphere from spilling over into her interaction with the student.
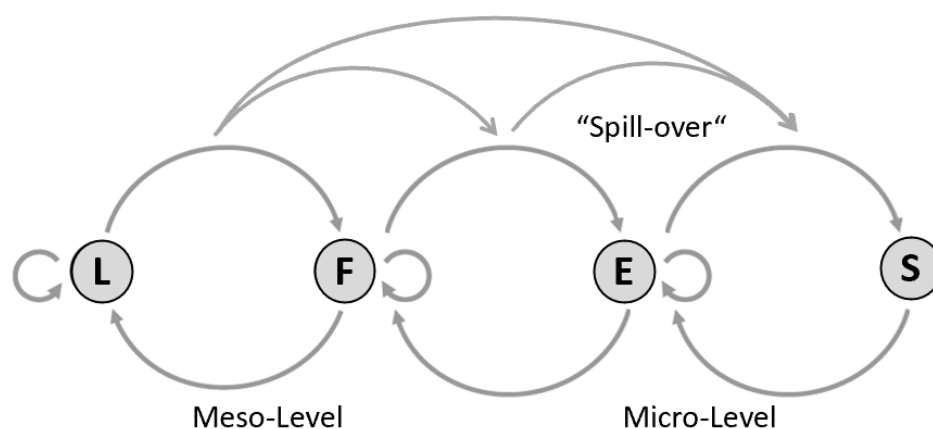
Figure 25: Affective spill-over between meso- and micro-level

L: leadership level, F: faculty level, E: educator, S: student; grey arrows between L, F, E, and S indicate affordances; grey arrows at the top indicate spillover effects

Summing up, this theme has treated the reflections on spill-over effects of patterns of interactions and interaffectivity from meso- to micro-level. Some spillovers were described to be isomorphic, i.e., the pattern of interaction was replicated on a different system level, such as in the case of the rejection of colleagues spilling over to rejection of students. In other cases, a tense atmosphere on the meso-level was described to affect the quality of the micro-level interaction, without a repetition of the same behavioral pattern. Either way, the educators depicted that these effects could be interrupted by affect regulation.

5.5. Program Implementation

The second aim of this study was to explore and identify factors helping and hindering the implementation process in the interplay between the EMS whole-school program, the participating schools' staff, and their local contexts (both meso- and macro-levels).

In the following, building on the complete set of interview data, several implementation factors across schools can be constructed. Importantly, the relationship between any of these factors and the EMS implementation is more complex than the categorization as 'helping' and 'hindering' can express. This will be unraveled in the respective themes in greater detail. This first section is about what can mainly be seen as helping factors, but as it will be exemplified the helping factors must be understood from a systems perspective in the context of possibilities at the very different schools.

5.5.1. Helping Factors

A) Program Resonating with School's Enacted Values Fosters Implementation, but School Context Matters

Before joining the EMS program school leaders at all three schools arranged a vote among their faculty to decide if the school should join, and majority vote was obtained from each school. Hence, leaders and educators at all three schools espoused their intention to participate, and at all schools they along the project period carried out the required organizational activities.

Analyzing the data there are however some differences across schools related to the leaders' and educators' portrayal of espoused and enacted values in relation to the EMS program. Looking at the individual schools from a systems perspective, it should be noted that this might be about more than individual persons' intentions. In some systems, it might be easier to enact certain values related to empathy than in other systems.

The differences are for example seen in how leaders portrayed their intentions and engagement in the pre-interviews. For two of the leadership teams, the values and goals of the EMS project were quite explicit already at the beginning of the project. They saw empathy as central for learning and expressed their alignment with the project *("a deep conviction that […] empathy […] is the basis for learning", "I find it so positive, the intention behind this project, that I thought: This is […] my personal contribution.")* Moreover, the relational climate at school was seen as part of their work responsibilities. For instance, they spoke of their *"responsibility"* to remove *"a communication barrier"* in a conflict situation, as well as of their intention to *"role model" "good communication"* and build *"trust"* within the faculty. They also depicted corresponding measures and artifacts they had implemented, e.g., multi-professional teams, time slots for educators' collaboration, meeting procedures, and appreciative weekly bulletins. Hence, they espoused the values of relational qualities such as empathy or appreciation and gave examples where they enacted this value.

By contrast, another leader team in the pre-interview expressed a lack of clarity about the program goals. The expression of having *"bought the pig in the poke"* was for example used, and a principal further outlined: *"We got involved in this project with a very high level of pedagogical goodwill or expectation. In the free market economy, one would not simply accept such an offer like EMS. We really don't know what's in store for us."* They like the teams at the other two schools espoused a wish for more empathy and appreciative communication, but they did not refer to initiating any concrete measures in the past to improve their faculty climate. Nor did they emphasize their own responsibility to actively role-model these values and shape structures in support of them.

Strikingly, these differences in the pre-interviews with the leaders seemed to prevail in how the educators from these respective schools portrayed their faculties' general attitude towards EMS. The leaders with less initial clarity about EMS spoke in the post-interview of having gained *"a feeling about what it was generally about"* and benefitting from it, but they also mentioned own *"resentment"* and *"a large percentage [in the faculty] who does not really know or grasp what it is about or what the goal is."* Congruently, educators from this school

tended to mention colleagues who were critical about EMS, as one educator for instance paraphrased:

> "'I have invested so much time into a training and I can work well with it and now I do not want to invest more in something which is so similar, so that I do not really learn anything new." (Hanna, Pos. 46)

Another educator stated that this faculty seemed to be lacking *"basic acceptance, goodwill"* towards EMS. However, she also mentioned that colleagues whom she had expected to reject the training were positive about it: *"'Oh I had lots of prejudice against EMS, but it was really beautiful."*

In contrast, at the schools whose leaders had expressed their alignment with EMS from the start, leaders continued to express this, and so did the educators*:*

> *"WE definitely have the feeling when we do this big organizational effort [...] that it is for something really good. [...] You send these colleagues away [to the EMS modules] with a really good feeling."* (Pos. 5)

Educators portrayed their faculty's general attitude towards EMS as positive and rather committed (e.g., *"Well, everyone who has been there so far thinks it's great."* Or *"Everyone has supported it and that already for more than two years [...]. I think this is quite telling in terms of our faculty."*)

All interviewed educators espoused the value of empathy and their alignment with EMS as well as the benefits they gain from the program, and such expressions were likely subject to positivity and social desirability biases in the interview situation. However, they also differed in how they portrayed their colleagues' attitude, and these differences cannot be explained in the same way. But a statement made by the leader of the more critical school points to a potential explanation:

> *"There was resentment that I felt myself, but that my colleagues also mentioned, so they also wanted to refuse. So if you're [...] in a somewhat harsh location in the reality of Berlin, [...] [EMS] sometimes seemed a bit fussy."* (Pos. 439)

This passage may shed some light on an important factor shaping faculties' different attitudes – the school's social and systemic context. Here, equity issues in the social reality in the wider school setting, its neighborhood, culture, etc. seem to shape the possibility of enacting values related to empathy.

Summing up, this theme has focused on differences in the school professional's intentionality regarding EMS, in terms of an alignment of espoused and enacted values. As mentioned, this might not just be about individual's choices but also about how easy it is to enact certain values in a specific context. The key point is however, that a higher and more consistent faculty motivation during the implementation of a specific program like here EMS appears to be facilitated by a consistency of the school leaders' espoused and enacted values.

B) Program Fosters Empathic Listening and Dialogue Among Faculty

This theme was constructed with a focus on the interplay between the EMS training and the relationships among the schools' faculty members. Many educators and school leaders spoke of a lack of collaboration and mutual support among educators due to working conditions. Here, the whole-school approach and dialogical practices provided by EMS were drivers for change in favor of supportive, empathic relationships.

Educators tended to speak of a lack or, literally, a *"vacuum"* of collaborative and supportive peer relationships (e.g., *"the teacher is always a lonely warrior. We hardly collaborate with other teachers."*) Not only the amount of collaboration but also the quality of the communication was depicted as unsatisfying by some, using the metaphor of a *"soup in the pot"* pointing to a lack of new perspectives:

> *"We are all so much in our soup and […] We do not really look outside. Each one has his class and works and moves forward. And thinks: 'It will somehow work out.' And then you have a little exchange with your neighbor: 'Is it the same with you?' But you don't have any solution. Everyone says: 'Uh, it is just as terrible'. And: 'Well, don't tell me about it.' […] And it's like that in all schools."* (Maria, Pos. 349)

Here, the educator depicted complaining as a habitual and unsatisfying pattern of communication among colleagues. On the other hand, educators who did experience supportive peer-relationships with colleagues stressed how important they were (*"One really NEEDS […] a conversation partner at the school […]. The exchange is super, super, super important. And then you can also cope a little better with the not so nice experiences."*)

The EMS program fostered empathic dialogue between colleagues that facilitated a shift in perspective on daily challenges: *"The fact that I misinterpreted it [a student's behavior], this shows how good it is to speak about such things to gain a different view on them."* Educators stressed that this exchange was helpful for them. *"This possibility to speak about relationships to children […] which are stuck. That has really helped me along." "You somehow come to some paths through EMS."*

Experiencing the enhanced quality of dialogue and attention during these EMS practices, these educators felt inspired to generally improve their communication:

> *"We totally noticed how important it is to listen and let the other finish talking. […] At some point we said: 'We must change our conversational culture. From now on we will not interrupt each other. And we are persistent until now and notice that it brings relief. […] Listen and shut up. [laughing]."* (Rhia, Pos. 140)

The effect of these phone calls was described as a shift in communication, comprising the *"rare"* quality of *"calm"* and a sense of being *"very awake afterwards."* Another educator mentioned initiating EMS dialogues with a colleague during the breaks: *"We have 25 minutes time and we sat down in the park. And we tried to do it exactly the same way."*

Besides practicing dialogue formats, the program was portrayed to deepen the relationships with other colleagues participating in the same modules (*"As a training group we always reassured each other. […] 'And how did you manage to stay with yourself today?'"* Others stressed that the shared experience (*"one can talk about the same thing"*) fostered a sense of closeness (*"one is not as strange any longer."*) Furthermore, they could remind each other of the EMS exercises (*"Then it does not get lost."*)

Summing up, EMS was perceived to remedy a perceived lack of supportive peer relationships both via the shared module experience and through specifically devised dialogical practices fostering empathy, attentive listening, and providing meaningful feedback, which enabled the peers to support each other with their work-related challenges. However, it must be kept in mind that since these dialogues were not part of any formal work structure, the positive effects depended on the educators' initiative to keep practicing between EMS modules.

C) Program Providers' Relationship to Faculty Models Empathy

This theme centers on the interplay between the program provider and the faculty, described as empathic and a role model for the intended change. This interplay has two facets, firstly, the relationship to the project leaders of EMS, who also carry out the modules, and, secondly, the EMS module atmosphere. For example, a school principal explicitly called the EMS project leader a *"role model."*

> *"What also helps me is actually imagining [the project leader]. Sometimes I see her sitting […] in front of my inner eye, how she is with people […]. It helps me when I'm with people. [exhales fffff loudly]. It helps me to distance myself and let them be […] and no longer perceive them as threatening. […] That's how role models work."* (Leader_B_3, Pos. 53)

This good impression of the project leaders involved *"serenity"* and alignment with the promoted values, enhancing commitment to the program:

> *"And partly because of [the project leader] one keeps doing it. […] To stand up for it for a lifetime, out of conviction, and to invest like that. Then I think: no, they invested, and you want to support it yourself."* (Leader_B_3, Pos. 53)

Moreover, the EMS leaders' consistency was also mentioned in response to critique (*"I think they took it quite well. […] I found that very sovereign of the two."*)

Secondly, the educators emphasized the relational atmosphere of the EMS modules (see for more details also theme on Self), characterizing it as attuned and conducive to personal learning processes (*"There I feel really held and well. I am being listened to and I listen to others and I am really involved in it."*) disrupting habitual behaviors and expectations (*"The pleasant thing was at first something that really confused me, namely nothing was demanded from me at all."*) Furthermore, the educators expressed positive surprise about the professional quality of the program, compared to other trainings.

Summing up, in the interplay between the program and the school professionals, the program providers and the training modules provided the qualities which were intended to be adopted by the whole learning community and supported the implementation process.

D) Situational Program Translation in Classroom, but Workload Interferes

This theme was constructed to center on the translation of the EMS program into the domain of educator's daily work, focusing on their use of EMS practices. The educators highlighted using the program practices in the classroom flexibly, based on perceived situational requirements and opportunities. Among these perceived requirements and opportunities were, firstly, the educators' and the students' perceived level of stress and attentiveness, secondly, classroom management aspects, such as features of the structure and process of a lesson, and, thirdly, the momentary state of the relationship to the class or to individual students. These three different factors will be illustrated as follows. Here is a quote highlighting the first and the second point:

> *"I love the elevator exercise, or just a short body scan. If I notice […] I need this now. No? And now they just go along with it. It was often the situation that I think in the morning: I'm really stressed out, I need an exercise like this and they have to go along with it […]. They also like to take part. Some don't want to. They don't have to, so no compulsion. […] Well, it's really this coming down, concentrating on yourself and when everyone is relaxed, then it starts"* (Rhia, Pos. 144)

Moreover, the first and second point were also mentioned in relation to children's situational needs (*"how the children are doing"*; *"When just too much was written […] or if some […] need a transition. […] I use that for that. […] And I have the feeling myself: 'well, now it's enough.' And then everyone gets up and then taps herself off and we do movement games.)"*

To the second point, using EMS for classroom management, some spoke of integrating the exercises into daily routines. For instance, an educator introduced exercises for *"starting the day - similar to EMS"* such as *"tapping at a distance"* or a *"guided massage. […]. And then found that the children were much calmer and more focused."*

The third point mentioned above was using EMS practices to serve the quality of the educators' relationships to students, in particular when confronted with relational challenges. Educators described to employ brief practices of mindfulness to self-regulate, gain a meta-perspective on the relational process, and to shape this process in positive ways, re-establishing attunement with students. In one of the schools, educators coined this whole process as *"placing the feet on the ground"* – a phrase taken from guided meditations in EMS instructing participants to place one's feet firmly on the ground. A leader from this school summarizes: *"teachers have become sensitive to feel that it doesn't work without contact, and that they have the tools to come back into contact."*

Translating program practices into everyday life was a flexible, bottom-up process, with educators even utilizing practices that were not taught in the EMS program, but that enhanced their well-being in the classroom (*"another relaxation thing in between, which I*

either take from EmS or from the things I've done before." "I've been practicing Feldenkrais for many years and now/quasi reminded me of it. [...] Now I also incorporate it into everyday life from time to time.") In a nutshell, educators used the exercises situationally and flexibly, *"One stacks it into the toolbox [...] and when you need, you take it out."*

Summing up, program practices were translated and flexibly adapted to the domain of daily work, depending on aspects of the situation, e.g., the needs of the educators, the students, and their relationship. However, numerous factors also prevented the perceived opportunity to use the practices, and hindered the implementation process which will be outlined as follows.

5.5.2. Hindering Factors

So far, we have seen that some features of the interplay between the program, the faculty, and the work setting were supportive for the implementation process, namely, an alignment of the program with the school's enacted values, the program filling a perceived need by fostering supportive relationships among faculty members, a positive relationship of the school professionals to the program providers, and a flexible and situational translation of the program practices to the work context. In the following, several themes will be presented concerning obstacles to the implementation.

E) Workload and Competing Demands Impede Translating Program into Daily Practice

This theme centers on workload and competing demands as main challenges to a successful implementation of the EMS program, focusing on the interplay between program and work setting. Educators spoke about how their workload prevented them from implementing EMS in their daily work. Reversely, the organizational workload tied to the EMS project was also challenging - on top of the stressful work (e.g., *"totally stressful"*). For leaders, this was as a main stressor: *"There was a time when I was afraid [...] whether one can MANAGE it. It is stress for the school, [...] the organizational aspect."*

Strikingly, educators' general workload appeared as a ubiquitous theme across interviews (e.g., *"From everywhere the teachers are being bombarded with things that they are supposed to do."*) They spoke in illustrative ways about how workload impacted the EMS implementation, e.g., daily routine *"swallows it all very quickly"* so that *"it just slips away."* For some, this was experienced with *"regret."* Here, the disruptions in everyday life were highlighted as particularly strong impediments: *"there are always changes and one must be very flexible. [...] and two days later I notice: Man, you have forgotten it again."* Under these circumstances, conscious deliberation was crucial (*"One has to consciously create niches and that is not quite easy."*)

As a bottom line, the workload of educators was an obstacle to the implementation:

> *"But it's very, very difficult for me to take that with me into everyday life, because it's really so encapsulated [...] It is a task that I give myself even MORE, in addition to everything else that I already have to do [...]. It is a task that of course makes*

everyday life easier for me. But in order for it to work in such a way, I have to integrate it first. And that, I think, is the really, really big challenge with EMS." (Franziska, Pos. 150)

Here, the educator alluded to the translation of the program requiring effort before it makes daily work easier. Educators employed metaphors such as EMS being *"encapsulated"* which illustrate a perceived stretch between the program and the domain of daily work.

Summing up, workload was a main hindering factor for the implementation.

F) COVID-19 Pandemic Impeding System's Capacity to Absorb Change

This theme was formulated to account for the COVID-19 pandemic critically interfering with the EMS implementation. Hence, the focus is on the interplay between the EMS program, the school faculty, and the situation of the pandemic. Themes from interviews with the school professionals (published in Herrmann et al. 2021) show that in disrupting structures and routines at school, the pandemic afforded constant adaptation to a volatile and uncertain process which also impacted the affective climate on the classroom-, parental-, faculty-, and leadership levels. Regarding EMS, this situation shortly after the program's initiation at the schools impeded their capacity to absorb change impulses *("Any support in the form of structures and usual patterns is missing.")* COVID-19 not only disrupted the school structures, but also the EMS participants' capacity for learning and integrating input from EMS. As a school leader outlined:

> *"We WERE at a point before [COVID-19] where we got an incredible boost from EMS. [...] And it was so extreme - it didn't disappear, but it was superimposed on at least for a full year, which went very, very differently. That's how I imagine it to be like when you wake up from coma."* (Leader_B_3, Pos. 6)

The leader elucidated further in more detail how the pandemic interrupted the process of translating the program into their work context:

> *"I felt like it [the learning from EMS] clicked. [...] I can continue to use it. And then there was also the fact that Corona intervened. That I thought: man, we actually wanted to practice this. We actually wanted to use that. Where we said we do that more often, that the three of us then take our time for things like that."* (Leader_B_3, Pos. 34)

Like this school leader, many of the interviewees highlighted how the pandemic impaired their ability to *"grasp"* the input from EMS (e.g., *"somehow this whole lockdown thing sort of slipped right in the middle of it"*) with the result that "*there is no practice afterwards."* In this context, the metaphor of a *"hole"* was used referring in hindsight to the discontinuity caused by the pandemic (*"There is a hole with me"*; *"almost like there is a black hole in-between"*), along with *"forgetfulness."*

Accordingly, it was highlighted in the interviews during the year of the pandemic that the new situation demanded all focus and energy (e.g., *"that really challenged you on all channels"* so

that the EMS training was not a *"topic at the moment,"* (*"This discussion about empathy […] seems like a luxury in retrospect which we had at a time when we didn't have any basic problems."*

Summing up, the context factor of the pandemic brought along massive disruptions and overload for the school professionals which generally impeded their capacity to translate EMS into their daily work. Exceptions were also mentioned, such as reduced class sizes that improved focusing on relationships (see Herrmann et al. 2021). Moreover, the pandemic reduced the school professionals' possibilities of relating with each other and with students, thereby impeding the quality of communication:

> *"It was very strange for us, because we had to give a lot of orders quickly, without talking to the faculty. […] It was orders. Orders, orders, orders. […] No talking, no time for appreciation, no time for seeing the other, not much time for listening."* (Leader_A_2, Pos. 9)

The pandemic made for an uncertain and volatile work context which impaired the possibility of implementing EMS. However, the program was also portrayed as a support in dealing with emotional and relational aspects of the crisis, fostering self-care, self-regulation, and perspective-taking. The school leaders, for instance, emphasized learning in EMS about *"what crisis does to people",* and gaining a necessary distance which enabled more constructive leadership (*"Being able to step out a little and look a little better from the outside"* and *"once I UNDERSTAND what is happening, I can act a little better."* It was required from school professionals to respond to emotionally charged colleagues or parents (*"we had colleagues or parents sitting here and crying, who really felt completely desperate"*) but also feeling *"less attacked"* by aggressive behaviors, which were instead seen as a *"part of the crisis."* Hence, leaders empathized with others and dealt with situations in constructive and non-escalatory ways, in spite of being *"under pressure"* themselves. They mentioned the example of being rang up frequently by a mother on the phone who voiced complaints about home schooling, and that by deliberately taking her perspective (*"she has no other place to vent"*) they were finally able to provide sufficient support to the mother for her to *"calm down."* Other leaders and educators mentioned being supported in coping with exhaustion and stress by the EMS program.

Summing up, the pandemic largely impeded implementing EMS due to its disruption of structures and the corresponding work overload for leaders and educators which diminished their capacity to learn from EMS. Besides that, the program input and the training modules were described to increase the school professionals' capacities to cope with the pandemic in its emotional and relational aspects by fostering self-care, stress-regulation, and perspective-taking.

G) Program counter to macro-level conditions

This theme was formulated to account for described tensions between macro-level properties of the school system on the one hand and both the EMS program and these school professionals' values and intentions on the other. In this regard, school professionals spoke of a stark contrast between the current school system and their own as well as EMS'

intentionality *(e.g., "Everything that we have here as basic structures for students prevents what we actually want", "so many things stand in the way of a self-responsible child at school."*

The metaphor of a hamster wheel was used to describe these conditions as stressful, pressured, and preventing empathy (*And that is a hamster wheel. You step and step, because you always think: You MUST not stop"*; "*One does not have the strength, or the muse, or the time, to really look: how are the others doing? Rather one is in one's own hamster wheel."* These conditions were explicitly described as impediments to the translation of the EMS program into the daily work: "*given the conditions of the education system in Berlin, the processes at elementary schools […], it's very, very difficult to apply [EMS] in a straightforward way."* Accordingly, another leader outlined: "*Under these conditions which we have here at school, maybe also in this country, we will not succeed."*

A school leader scrutinized these perceived impediments more closely, mentioning in a follow-up e-mail after an interview the spatial and temporal structures *("a 45-minute system with fixed breaks"* inhibited the capacity to *"stay with oneself"),* the overall workload and schedule, lacking sufficient time for dialogue with children, parents and multiprofessional collaboration. Furthermore, educators also criticized work structures that made it impossible for *"those who belong together, to get together"*, and similar issues have been mentioned by other interviewees, along with the framework curriculum prescribing top-down evaluation without considering students' interests.

To sum up, there macro-level structures were perceived to be misaligned with the values or goals due to insufficient degrees of freedom for educators and students to design their own work and learning and collaborate in more profound ways. Here, the educators and leaders who expressed this tension portrayed EMS as coherent with their values and intentions despite and as a possible *"way out"* of this systemic dilemma, as one leader espoused: "*the ONLY way, the only TINY straw, to really realistically make it better is with empathy."* Furthermore, some portrayed EMS as a pointer towards what education could be like (referring to an EMS module: "*for two days that the hamster wheel was actually slowed down. […] And that's good to have felt that because I know it's possible.")*

Some leaders and educators expressed their motivation to carry on despite this tension, or even to work towards shifting the macro-system, speaking of EMS as an "*earthquake for me and the school system",* feeling *"ignited"* and motivation *"to advance the movement on a small scale."*

Concluding, the tension between EMS and the macro systemic conditions was highlighted by these school professionals. This tension was described to result on the one hand in difficulties with the implementation, but also in an increased motivation to work towards a different possibility for the education system which would be more aligned with the professionals' intrinsic values.

H) Program highlights distinction between early and late (or non-) adopters

Introducing the program to the faculty highlighted a distinction between educators who liked and ones who disliked it. This affected how the former group of early adopters viewed the

latter ones – for instance, wishing for them to change their attitude or feeling disappointed. Some educators also mentioned an alternative view, namely, acceptance for these differences.

This distinction shaped the view of the school leaders on their faculty. Their intention was to promote an empathic stance as *"consensus"* among the faculty: *"It is my great fear that this stance does not emerge."* The leaders now felt disappointment both at the lack of perceived change among troublesome faculty members (*"punch us … personally in the back"; "deep frustration and anger"*) and at a lack of motivation for EMS by others (*"where is the appreciation? You have seen it. You have experienced it. What is holding you back?"*) The leaders also reflected that their own expectations may have been too high *("one has to stay realistic. Some people are beyond hope.")* Additionally, also the educators mentioned feeling *"disappointed"* at their colleague's lack of motivation. It seems that these distinctions were not created by the EMS program, but it highlighted differences which had already existed prior to EMS. A statement by a teacher about her *"prejudice"* towards certain *"teacher personalities"* may point to the source of some of these distinctions:

> *"People who I don't think are very comfortable with the concept of mindfulness at all […] in the interaction, I would say, they are more focused on […] advocating for what they think (laughs) and […] don't perceive or absorb so much of the other, and are not so flexible and lack that kind of sensitivity."* (Jill, Pos. 37)

This quote suggests that the distinctions originate in educators' empathy and their attitude towards mindfulness. The following extract seems to indicate that these distinctions which were highlighted by EMS also can be dealt with by applying the stance which EMS intends to promote, which is meeting these colleagues as "*legitimate*" others:

> *"I know that anyway from my teaching job. […] Everyone has their conditions, their biography, which they bring along with them going there [to the EMS training]. And I simply go there with my biography. For me, it suits me. I benefit from it. And others are at a completely different starting point. […] I have to free myself a bit from my arrogance, right? And then it's all legitimate. […] if someone does not understand the concept of equal dignity, because it is MUCH too foreign to them, yes? And MUCH too far away from their whole horizon of experience. Then that's the way it is. Then I must remain calm within myself and I would actually […] like to give it to everyone […]. And of course I always have to control my impatience."* (Julia, Pos. 434)

Concluding, the implementation process also involved an unintended sharpening of a distinction between alleged early and late adopters. Former viewed the latter partly with disappointment and frustration, but also reflected on own expectations on behalf of the others, and, potentially, found acceptance for differences.

6. Discussion

Given the critical role of relationships in schools for health and learning outcomes (Cornelius-White 2007; Hamre and Pianta 2001; Roorda et al. 2017; Roorda et al. 2011; Spilt et al. 2011), it is essential to explore how educators' relational competence can be improved. Therefore, this study investigated the reflections of school leaders and educators participating in a whole-school relational competence training, the EMS program. Specifically, the first aim of this thesis was to reconstruct the shifts in the social fields during EMS experienced and enacted by the school professionals, firstly, on a micro-level between educators and students as well as parents (Research Aim 1.1.), and, secondly, on a meso-level, among school professionals (Research Aim 1.2.). Moreover, the study aimed to examine the factors facilitating and hindering the implementation process of the EMS program (Research Aim 2).

The main body of the discussion is structured according to these aims. To provide context, the first discussion chapter provides a summary of the findings (Chapter 6.1.), and the second focuses on methodology of the study (Chapter 6.2.). Thereafter, the findings concerning Research Aim 1.1. will be discussed, providing insights into the social field shifts on a micro-level. Holding the findings of this study up against the literature on relational competence, mindfulness, and the teacher-student relationship, the chapter highlights the intertwinement between the actors and context, offering a new perspective on the significance of intra-personal abilities. Findings concerning Research Aim 1.2. are treated in chapter 6.3.2. Here, the diverse findings of both positive, negative, and stagnant developments at a meso-level within the social fields of the school faculties highlight the importance of the initial conditions at each school for the success of an intervention. Subsequent chapter 6.3.3. will discuss the field shift reconstructions in relation to the notion of generative social fields. Following these considerations, chapter 6.4. provides suggestions for future research on social fields and relational competence. Thereafter, practical implications will be outlined (Chapter 6.5.) based on the findings of factors helping and hindering the implementation (Research Aim 2).

6.1. Summary of Results

Concerning social field shifts on a micro-level (Research Aim 1.1.), the interviewed educators illustrated detailed examples of how they changed their ways of interacting with students and parents and the effects on the social field between them. Consequently, educators reported participating in more generative and collaborative interactions and experiencing improved atmospheres (see Figure 19). Across these shifts reported by the interviewees in specific interactions, the study furthermore synthesized themes describing patterns that were more generic. Depicted in Figure 20, these themes included recognizing that some habitual reactions and strategies of interacting with students were unsuccessful ('habit'), being aware of the situational affordances which provided opportunities for change ('situation'), the ability to momentarily suspend habitual reactions ('break'), showing empathic and compassionate attunement to others ('other') as well as oneself ('self'), moreover, communicating respectfully and in line with personal values and needs ('relationship'), and finally,

experiencing positive affect in the social field and seeing positive outcomes in others ('motivation to continue').

Regarding the longitudinal meso-level developments within social field of the faculty (Research Aim 1.2.), themes from educators and school leaders highlighted the complexity of these processes which were portrayed differently in each school. This complexity included both positive shifts, such as decreased contagion of negative affect and more empathy, and persisting challenges such as pathologizing patterns of blaming and defending.

Educators reported on translating the EMS whole-school program into their daily work contexts (Research Aim 2) situationally, based on what they and their students needed in each situation. Factors supporting this translation comprised a perceived alignment of the program with schools' enacted values, and targeted program practices fostering supportive dialogue among educators. However, the program translation was also impeded by factors such as workload and stress, particularly due to the COVID-19 pandemic (with findings outlined in Herrmann et al. 2021), and more generally by a perceived mismatch between the macro-level conditions of schooling and the program.

The following sections will illuminate the implications of these major findings for the overall field of research and intervention on relationships at schools, beginning with a discussion of the methodology of the study.

6.2. Discussion of Methods

6.2.1. Quality Criteria

This section examines the study according to the quality criteria of qualitative research proposed by Steinke (2004) and Kvale (1995) comprising inter-subject- comprehensibility, indication of the research process, empirical foundation, and reflected subjectivity, as well as communicative validity.

The study has fulfilled the criterion of *inter-subject comprehensibility* by recording and transcribing the interviews and publishing the system of themes of the thematic analysis in the appendix. The research process is outlined and documented, providing detailed and transparent descriptions of the specific rationales behind the procedures of data collection, transcription, and analysis. Additionally, adjustments and choices made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have been documented and presented.

The second criterion suggested by Steinke (2004) is the *indication of the research process*. In this study, the qualitative approach involving interviews with individuals and focus groups is suitable for the exploratory research aims. Participants' self-report data were elicited in an interview situation with an interviewer who was also a trainer in the EMS program. To minimize social desirability bias, participants were explicitly asked to honestly report their

experiences, emphasizing confidentiality and the research interest in understanding their perspectives, rather than proving the program's success. Although efforts were made to create a trusting atmosphere, it was acknowledged that social desirability may have influenced the data to some extent.

Thirdly, the codified analysis procedure of a thematic analysis has been carried out, providing the *empirical foundation* for the themes developed in this study. Additionally, core themes from previous interviews were validated through a 'member checking' process with the interviewees during repeated interviews. However, it is acknowledged that themes are not objective entities residing in the data, but are constructed by the researchers analyzing the data (Braun and Clarke 2006).

Given the constructivist epistemological position (Berger and Luckmann 1966) of this study, *reflected subjectivity* is a crucial quality criterion. The methods section includes a transparent statement by the author outlining subjective assumptions and intentions that shape the formulation of research questions, selection of methods, data collection process, and interpretation of the data. Particular attention is given to the dual role of the researcher as both a facilitator in the EMS project and a researcher. To reduce bias and ensure validity, a second rater interpreted the data and themes were constructed collaboratively. Moreover, the dual role also served as a resource in terms of familiarity with the training content and the schools.

Overall, this study demonstrates adherence to key quality criteria for qualitative research, while also acknowledging and addressing inherent subjectivity in the research process. The transparent documentation and consideration of potential biases contribute to the credibility and reliability of the study's findings.

Communicative validity (Kvale 1995) is achieved through testing knowledge claims in dialogue, meaning that claims do not simply approximate social reality, but require a conversation about this reality. In this study, consensual validation was achieved through various means. For example, "member-checking" was conducted with the interview partners during and after an interview to ensure alignment between interviewee's perspective and the researcher's interpretation of their statements. This process included a post-interview during which the interviewees were presented with reconstructions of field shifts and invited to provide feedback on the sustainability of these shifts. Informants were also invited to participate in the revising the field shift reconstructions to ensure a better correspondence with their lived experiences.

Furthermore, the data analysis process involved ongoing dialogue between two raters to address any conflicts in their understanding, with consensus serving as the criterion of validation. To ensure communicative validity and inform the data analysis, consultations with experts in the fields were conducted. In-depth dialogues were held with individuals such as Dr. Mette Boell, co-founder of the M.I.T. Systems Awareness Lab, and co-supervisor of this thesis, Prof. Karl Tomm, the originator of the IPscope classification of patterns of interactions, Prof. Anne Maj Nielsen, who developed the notion of relational awareness and relational

responsivities, and Dr. Dan Siegel, who coined the term 'integration' as a foundational feature of generative social fields. Additionally, a board of practitioners and researchers engaged in advancing generative social fields, including Peter Senge, Mette Boell, Prof. Kimberly Schonert-Reichl, and Trina Haygaru, provided valuable insights.

Finally, communicative validity was ensured by presenting the data to various audiences, including the informants and other participants of the EMS project, in the context of a presentation at the Danish Embassy. The results were also shared with the scientific community through discussions with the scientific advisory board of the EMS project, which comprised renowned researchers in education from USA, Israel, UK, and Denmark. Furthermore, the findings were presented and discussed at academic conferences such as two European Conferences on Education Research in June 2022 and in August 2023 and the Relation-Centered Education Network Conference in April 2022 and in June 2023.

These efforts in consensual validation and broad engagement with experts and audiences contribute to the overall communicative validity of this study, enhancing the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings.

6.2.2. Limitations

When interpreting the findings of this study, the limitations and generalizability of the findings must be critically reflected. In qualitative research, the issue of whether findings can be generalized beyond the specific site, sample, and study has been a topic of controversy (Carminati 2018; Chenail 2010) Therefore, it is crucial to evaluate the limitations of the inferences that can be drawn based on the research findings.

The study achieved two types of generalizability consistent with its qualitative approach and research aims. Firstly, reader-transferability was ensured by providing detailed and comprehensive descriptions of the interactions and their development. This allows the readers to evaluate whether similar phenomena may apply to their specific context, enabling a case-by-case transfer (Firestone 1993). Secondly, the study achieved analytic generalizability by refining and illustrating certain concepts through rich and situated in-depth descriptions. For instance, the study contributed to conceptualizing (generative) social fields in triangulation with the empirical data. Moreover, it revealed important phenomena related to educators' cultivation of relational competence.

Collecting data from a diverse sample of multiple educational professions including teachers, childcare workers, and school leaders, the study provided insights into a multiplicity of perspectives on the EMS program and the shifts within various social fields. Nevertheless, additional perspectives and themes may very well have been constructed by expanding the sample size. For example, by identifying and interviewing educators with stronger criticisms of the EMS training, as well as students and parents. Therefore, it must be acknowledged that the findings from this sample of motivated educators willing to be interviewed cannot be generalized to the whole population of EMS participants. Moreover, any claims and statements about the social fields encompassing students and parents are partial, referring only to the field as experienced by the school professionals.

Generally, the scope of any research project is limited, and often data can only be obtained from those willing to participate. However, this thesis did not aim at assessing the general effectiveness of the EMS project but at exploring the processes elicited by the project at the schools from the perspective of various school professionals. Within the scope of this aim, the study was able to reveal relevant dynamics and themes based on the rich und nuanced data provided by the diverse sample.

Nevertheless, some caution is due when interpreting the findings. The themes on social field shifts on a micro-level (Research Aim 1.1.) require careful interpretation, considering that these shifts may not have equally occurred throughout the whole population of EMS participants and that they only represent the school professionals' perspective. Moreover, they also may not have been fully integrated into the educators' practice. For instance, it is unlikely that the interviewed EMS participants were able to consistently suspend their habitual reaction tendencies (Theme HABIT) and never reciprocated aggression. Importantly, this has also not been claimed, nor would it be realistic.

However, the data enables the exploration of some of the complex processes elicited at the schools during EMS, allowing for meaningful conceptual generalizations. Based on the nuanced and rich illustrations of the change moments provided by the interviewed educators, inferences can be made about the factors that appear to be required for successful shifts in relational quality. For instance, it can be inferred that the capacity to disrupt habitual reactions often served as crucial ingredient for successful shifts in the relational quality.

Moreover, caution is also due when interpreting the meso-level themes (Research Aim 1.2.). Importantly, shifts in the school faculty social fields are not to be interpreted as 'representations', nor as 'exhaustive' portrayals of the respective schools, due to their complex and multi-layered nature. Much rather, the analysis deliberately triangulated between the perspectives held by leaders and educators, identifying tensions and points of convergence. Thereby, themes were constructed in a way which was meaningful for the research interest, providing insights into described shifts in atmospheres and patterns of interactions within the faculties. These themes can necessarily only describe a limited set of aspects within a much more complex development. This means for instance that some of the illustrated issues might also be found at other schools – albeit in different degrees and 'phenotypes'. Hence, these themes should be interpreted as patterns, challenges, and supporting factors within the developments in the faculty social field and not as descriptions of the schools.

It is worth mentioning that this thesis was an integral part of a larger mixed-methods (Creswell 2014) research project evaluating the EMS project also on a quantitative level with data collected from students and educators (including three control schools) at multiple time points. Therefore, it is crucial also consider the rationale of the overarching research project when viewing these findings. The in-depth descriptions provided by the qualitative themes from this sample of interviewees will be complemented by the quantitative findings from the whole population, with both types of data mutually informing the interpretation of one another (Creswell 2014). This will further enable an exploration of the generalizability of the concepts and themes identified in this study.

Additionally, based on above caveats, chapter 6.4. of this thesis suggests ways in which future research may extend the insights gained in this study. Critically reflecting the limitations, it is also important to highlight the strengths of this study, namely, its novel social fields framework and the rich and nuanced data on how educators and leaders reflected on shifts elicited by the EMS project. The discussion will draw from these strengths, elucidating the unique contribution of study to the research and discourse on relational competence and social fields.

6.3. Discussion of Results

6.3.1. Social Field Shifts (Micro-Level)

The study aimed at reconstructing the social field shifts on a micro-level (Research Aim 1.1.) between educators and students as well as parents. The findings of this study, as summarized above, shed light on several generic factors that contribute to positive shifts in the social fields between educators and students as well as with parents. Crucially, these factors also pinpoint to ways in which educators enacted relational competence within the daily work at schools, thereby improving the quality of social fields. This chapter will discuss these findings with reference to the existing literature on relationships at schools in general, and, specifically, on relational and social emotional competence.

Importantly, the findings challenge the assumption that relational competence is always readily available. Despite teachers' motivation or self-image of being empathic, the dynamics of the social field can override such intentions. For example, faced with a 'disruptive' student, teachers may experience negative affect and subtly blame the student for it thereby fueling a negative interaction cycle. Here, the negative autonomous pattern within the field may override the educators' intentionality.

The study made a significant contribution by offering a contextual understanding of relational competence within the framework of a social field. The findings elucidated the process of enacting relational competence as requiring targeted efforts, providing a concrete contrast to the often abstract and intangible values and concepts associated with relationships. Relational competences are revealed as complex and non-linear processes with their own unique ingredients and conditions of success, especially under the complex real-world conditions of school settings. While these conditions may vary between situations and individuals, the data suggests some commonalities or basic ingredients contributing to this process. In the following discussion, these factors will be explored in relation to existing literature.

The following headings organize the discussion, each addressing one of the central findings of the study (micro-level themes).

1) Self-regulation de-stresses the intercorporeal intertwinement (Theme SELF): This section will explore the significance of self-regulation in managing stress and emotional reactions, which is essential for generative relational interactions.

2) Noticing responsivities brings the freedom not to go along with affordances and prevents de-generative patterns of interactions (Theme BREAK): Here, the focus will be on the importance of educators' awareness of their own and others' responsivities in breaking free from habitual patterns and fostering positive interactions.

3) De-centering teacher habitus and discerning espoused from enacted empathy (Theme HABIT): This section will delve into the need for educators to challenge their ingrained habits and differentiate between their espoused values and their actual empathic actions.

4) Attunement brings closeness and requires intention, the suspension of negative other-images and embodied resonance (Theme OTHER): This part will explore the significance of attunement in fostering closeness and empathy, emphasizing the need for intention, suspension of negative biases, and embodied resonance.

5) Handling conflicts by constructing self and other as different, yet legitimate (Theme RELATIONSHIP): Here, the focus will be on the strategies educators can use to address conflicts and construct constructive relationships.

6) How to sustain the shifts? This final section will explore the challenge of sustaining these positive shifts in educators' interactions.

Self-Regulation 'De-Stresses' the Intercorporeal Interwinement

Due to the high prevalence of stress and burnout for educators (Seibt and Kreuzfeld 2021), key contextual feature of enacting relational competence that deserves close attention is stress. In this study, a central finding across several themes (Theme Self, Examples A, G, and H; Meso-level Theme 2) was that the interviewed educators reported on regulating their own stress and 'curbing' the contagion process of stress and negative affect. The fact that stress and affect contagion were mentioned in the interviewees' reflections on their daily work concurs with studies showing the impact of emotion and stress contagion in organizations (Barsade et al. 2018) and between teachers and students (Jennings and Greenberg 2009; Oberle and Schonert-Reichl 2016), as well as among educators (Meredith et al. 2020).

The sources of stress mentioned by the educators (Examples A – J; Meso-level theme 1) corresponded well with the occupational stressors identified by previous educational research (Shirom et al. 2009; Stauffer and Mason 2013), including interpersonal conflicts and poor relationship quality with students, parent meetings, and negativity among colleagues, workload, time pressure, and disruptions of routines. Therefore, these findings confirm that the sample of educators and the situations they recounted can be regarded in that sense as representative for their profession and may be transferable to a larger population.

The educators mentioned that sometimes unregulated stress could lead to reduced empathy and increased affective defensiveness (e.g., examples G, A). In conjunction with experiencing a higher general stress level, educators reported 'taking things personal' on a relational level, contributing to negative climate and degenerative interaction cycles with students, parents, and colleagues. This aligns with the correlation found by Oberle and Schonert-Reichl (2016)

between teachers' burnout-level and their students physiological stress measures and with a study by Meredith et al. (2020) highlighting that the interpersonal interactions between educators act as conduits for burnout contagion. Therefore, these educators' lived experience of their work settings aligns well with previous findings in the literature on educator stress and well-being – both in terms of the stressors and the way experienced stress tended to propagate throughout the social field.

Given the high prevalence of stressors in teachers' daily lives, it is crucial to cope with and manage this condition to effectively enact relational competence, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Steigleder et al. 2023; Herrmann, Aguilar-Raab & Nielsen 2021). Neuroscientific research suggests that acute stress can shift individuals from more cognitively demanding information processing to more habitual reaction patterns and decrease empathy (Bogdanov et al. 2021). Crucially, the educators in this study reported moments of change where they were better able to regulate their own stress, shaping the intercorporeal intertwinement of the social fields between them and their students and colleagues. By regulating their affective and bodily states both intra- and interpersonally, they were able to prevent the spread of stress and negativity in their social fields. Although the study design cannot confirm whether the EMS training directly influenced these changes, the educators unequivocally attributed such shifts to the training. This aligns with previous findings on mindfulness and SEL interventions improving teachers' adaptive emotion regulation (Hwang et al. 2017; Jennings et al. 2017) and reducing psychological and emotional distress (Oliveira et al. 2021b), also in German school settings (Altner et al. 2018; Kraft et al. 2022), as well as a substantial body of research on the stress-reducing effects of mindfulness (Querstret et al. 2020; van Loon et al. 2022).

The findings of this study highlighted the significance of educators' self-regulation, not only for educators' well-being but for enacting relational competence. This is congruent with the associations of teacher well-being with their social emotional capacity and the quality of the teacher-student relationship (Jennings and Greenberg 2009). As stated in the CASEL definition, educators should be able to manage their behavior even when emotionally aroused by challenging situations, regulate their emotions in healthy ways that facilitate positive classroom outcomes, and not compromise their health (ibid. pg. 493). This study sheds light on educators' lived experiences and their methods of regulating stress at school. In the interviews, educators and school leaders reported various strategies they used to regulate their stress and center themselves before responding to a situation. These strategies included pausing, allowing impressions to sink in, becoming aware of bodily sensations (such as feeling their feet on the floor), breathing mindfully, and re-appraising the situation (such as accepting the students' temporarily limited capacity for learning or concentration and adapting their lesson plans). These strategies share an intentionality and an aspect of mindfulness, which is consistent with previous findings of intentional brief mindfulness practices in challenging situations (Hwang et al. 2017; Laursen and Nielsen 2016; Morales 2018; Schussler et al. 2016). It is worth noting that strategies that worked for this specific group of educators may not be equally applicable for all educators. However, down-regulating stress levels by whatever means is critical for the enactment of relational competence. Under the stressful circumstances of daily work at school, de-stressing the field's intercorporeality significantly contributes to a relational environment that is conducive to well-being and learning. The systemic conditions of schooling render this a difficult task, as will be discussed later.

A social fields perspective contradicts the notion of self-regulation as a merely inward-oriented activity but highlights its relational nature. Since somatic and affective states propagate through inter-bodily resonance, the regulation of a teacher's stress impacts on the class, shifting the field. The EMS participants spoke of realizing this logic and intentionally utilizing it, allowing for a more optimal state of each member of the field. The next factor concerns suspending habitual responses during an interaction process.

Noticing Responsivities Brings the Freedom not to go Along with Affordances and Prevents Automatic Degenerative Patterns of Interactions

From time to time, it seems realistic to assume that the affordances within the social fields at school encourage rather de-generative or even destructive patterns of interactions such as blaming one another or escalating conflict between educators and students, and potentially even parents. In some circumstances, these patterns tend to degenerate the relationship quality and the well-being of those involved, potentially leading to burnout cascades in educators (Jennings and Greenberg 2009). In particular, students from challenging family backgrounds and at risk due to social inequities appear to be affected more frequently (Hamre and Pianta 2005; Lei et al. 2016). To prevent harm and serve the well-being of everyone involved, relational competence is crucial in these situations. The findings particularly emphasized the importance of an improved capacity in educators to disrupt their habitual behavioral and affective tendencies (theme Break). Consider for instance the example provided by an educator who was aware of her impulse to verbally attack a father she perceived as dominant, as well as of her interpretation about the father's behavior *as her own interpretation*. This de-centering from her habitual reactivity allowed her to instead inquire about the father's behavior which transformed the interaction's quality into a collaborative "eye-level" meeting (Example J).

The fact that educators in this study depicted a heightened present-moment awareness in their interactions and a capacity to de-couple from automatic behaviors corresponds to previous qualitative studies on mindfulness trainings for educators (Hwang et al. 2017; Morales 2018; Schussler et al. 2016). Discussing findings from the 'CARE for teachers' program, Schussler and colleagues (2016) argued that the attentional act of 'reperceiving' (Shapiro et al. 2006) was instrumental in enabling educators' self-regulation, as well as their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral flexibility along with clarity about their intentions and values. In fact, Shapiro and colleagues (2006) outlined how by developing the capacity to turn emotional states into an object or content of attention and to witness them intimately, the subject of experience (the 'experiencer') distinguishes itself from that object, thereby increasing the 'degrees of freedom' in response to such emotional states and moving beyond automatic reaction patterns. The findings of this thesis substantiate the idea that reperceiving contributes to a positive relationship quality. However, they also provide more precise insights into how such improvements were experienced to unfold in concrete interactions and suggest viewing these attentional qualities as embedded and embodied within a social field.

In contrast to the notion of reperceiving, the phenomenological concept of 'relational awareness' put forward by Nielsen and Petersen (2021) emphasizes intercorporeality as a foundation for social understanding, adding the important dimensions of embodiment, embeddedness, and context. The 'objects' of this awareness are the relational responsivities, i.e., the felt embodied resonance, affect, or thoughts, images etc., which are evoked in an interaction. In the example above, this comprised the educator's felt tension and her aggressive impulse to attack the father. Importantly, since responsivities are embodied, they form part of an intercorporeal intertwinement (Fuchs 2016b) in which the experienced 'affect' is at the same time bodily expressed as 'e-motion', thereby becoming an affordance for the interaction partner who feels drawn to some response in turn and so forth. By becoming aware of their felt responsivities at critical junctures during their interactions, the interviewed educators were able to a) self-regulate the affective load of their responsivities, b) de-center or disrupt automatic reaction patterns, and c) increase their degrees of freedom of responding and perceiving the situational affordance.

Revisiting the Example J illustrates these aspects. Here, Julia felt an aroused responsivity comprising in her body comprising the impulse to attack the father, as well as thoughts and images interpreting his behavior as an attempt to dominate the meeting. Becoming aware of her own responsivity, she was able to avoid acting on it. She further reported feeling *"surprise"* as she de-centered from her interpretation and an insight arose in her which she paraphrased *"I don't have to see this [the father's behavior] as aggression."* Hence, she widened the degrees of freedom available to her and chose to inquire about the father's behavior, initiating a transformative pattern of interaction. Thereby, the quality of the interaction was perceived to shift from pathologizing patterns of 'attacking and resisting' towards a collaborative and so-called 'wellness pattern of interactions'. The same was also found in moments of change reported by other interviewees. Conversely, educators also portrayed their habitual interactions to lack a recognition of the cues and signals concerning students' their emotional state and how they were affected by educators' actions, indicating an absence of reperceiving, and they highlighted being caught in habitual reactions as detrimental to a more empathic stance towards students. Therefore, the examples of dyadic field shifts in this thesis suggest that relational (reperceiving) awareness may prevent the enaction of pathologizing or de-generative patterns and contribute to a shift towards more wholesome and generative interactions (Tomm et al. 2014).

This suggests that the attentional 'meta-mechanism' of reperceiving – as a core mechanism of an embodied relational awareness – plays a key role in enabling educators to cross the threshold from re-enacting past habitual patterns to enacting generative changes in their interactions with students, parents, and colleagues.

The findings of this study suggest that enacting relational competence requires de-centering from automatic reactions and thereby enhancing the degrees of freedom of interacting. Some behaviors by students or parents are difficult for educators – and which ones these are might vary from person to person. The affordance of such behaviors evokes reaction tendencies in educators that can lead to degenerative or destructive kinds of interactions (Juul & Jensen). Therefore, when confronted with such difficult behaviors, the capacity to de-center from

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one's habitual reaction tendencies appears to be crucial to improve relationships at school. Hence, a perspective on relational competence which takes context seriously should acknowledge this factor and understand the importance of educators' capacity to suspend their own habitual reaction tendencies. As well as seek for ways to actively train this capacity.

Notably, the significance of the capacity to suspend automatic responses is not an entirely new finding. Rather, it aligns with the CASEL subcomponents of self-awareness and self-management (Elias et al. 1997). The findings support the view that these are central components of relational competence. However, what is added by this study is the understanding that these components are embedded in an interaction process, revealing that they are not merely 'intra-personal'. The relation of the intra-personal and inter-personal domains has been debated (Gottlieb and Matthiesen 2016). In fact, this study showed that intra- and inter-personal abilities – seen from a social fields perspective – are intimately entangled. The 'intra-personal' reperceiving of habitual reaction tendencies is at the same time an 'inter-personal' ability to regulate the social field. Thus, the conceptualization of relational competences should transcend the strict dichotomy of intra- and inter-, and acknowledge the contextual and relational pre-entanglement of such competences (Nielsen and Laursen 2020).

Since the nature of educators' reaction tendencies appears to crucially impact their relational competence, it will be discussed in the next section.

Decentering Teacher Habitus and Discerning Espoused from Enacted Empathy

Taking context seriously when it comes to relational competence also means that socialization must be considered. According to Fuchs (2016a), the responsivities of the actors in a social field are shaped by various kinds of learning and socialization processes. Some of these responsivities are proposed to originate in early biographic experiences (e.g., in the mother-infant dyad), while others may reflect later socialization processes and are conceived to carry and 'professional habitus' (Braun 2012; Diamond et al. 2004; Košinár and Laros 2022). A surprising finding of this study was that in the process of enacting relational competence in their daily work contexts, educators reported on experiencing habitual reaction tendencies counteracting their attunement which appear to originate in their professional habitus as teachers. Hence, interacting with students in a more attuned and empathic way particularly required to de-center such aspects of their habitus (Themes 'Habit'; Implementation A, G). While this appears to be an important phenomenon, it is rarely mentioned in the current state of the art literature and empirical studies on relational and social emotional competences. A few exceptions include the studies on mindfulness trainings for educators mentioned above. These studies highlight that disrupting automatic and habitual reaction tendencies (Hwang et al. 2017; Mackenzie et al. 2020; Morales 2018; Schussler et al. 2016) improves the quality of relationships between educators and students. Specifically, a study on a precursor of the EMS project explicitly addressed this topic, reporting that the participating pre-service teachers learned to 'enter into and drop out of the teacher's role' (Laursen and Nielsen 2016). The finding reveals that the pre-service teachers perceived aspects of the teacher role as an impediment to the relationship with students. Additionally, another study

scrutinized this topic, providing further insights into aspects of teacher's habitus counteracting attunement. Carrying out a micro-relational analysis of a teacher's reprimanding of the students, Aspelin (2017b) emphasized that these situations were influenced by 'conventional roles' – or in the terminology used here, by an internalized habitus. These roles involved two facets, educators' 'claims', i.e., their high expectations towards students which could create pressure, anxiety, and on the other hand, educators' high expectations and demands which they put on themselves, termed the 'obligations' of their conventional roles. Here, the findings from the EMS project further substantiate and expand on these studies results. Crucially, role-based obligations and claims can contribute to a vicious cycle in the social field between educator and student. Students not fulfilling the educators' claims were experienced as not living up to own 'obligations' and feelings of failure and irritability, which in turn shaped the educator's way of interacting with the student in such ways that it likely further de-motivated the student to fulfill the claims (see example A).

Further reaction tendencies which seem to carry this habitus were mentioned by the educators as detrimental to enacting relational competence. These included disciplining and reprimanding students, e.g., by yelling at them in order to re-establish students' attentional focus on a given task (in line with Aspelin 2017b) (creating a tense and even hostile atmosphere); perceiving students as a "disturbance" (preventing genuine collaboration); a rigid, standardized and pressured task-orientation demanding from students to "function" in the same way (without seeing students' unique abilities and limitations); attentional absorption in the activities of teaching content (precluding noticing and adapting to students' momentary reactions, affects, or attention capacities); a lack of differentiation between students' achievement, and the relationship to students, e.g., by interpreting student's low achievement as 'not getting in contact' with them (precluding the establishment of a trusting relationship as a base for teaching).

Importantly, according to Bourdieu's (1998) conceptualization, the habitus serves an adaptive function within the social field at a societal level. Despite their negative impact on relationship quality, these dispositions, role expectations, and behaviors are favorable within the systemic context of schooling. They are produced by and in turn reproduce the education system's incentive structures and 'rules of the game', e.g., by prioritizing getting the lesson content across over student learning (Nolan 2012), or the systemic artifacts, such as classroom architecture, class size etc. Such modes of operating, which were described in this study on a micro-level in the dyadic field between educator and student were thus shaped by larger structural and societal forces and historic processes. Alongside their adaptive function, within the peculiar intergenerational education processes at school, every person in the current role of an educator has previously for many years been part of such an organization in the role of a student, and thus has internalized particular interaction patterns which readily get reproduced and activated (Korthagen 2017; Zeichner and Gore 1989). The orientation is therefore explicitly not to individualize these reaction tendencies but see them as 'options' which get reproduced in the social field. 'Wiping out disturbances' (Example A), for that matter, may be an echo of the more authoritarian pedagogies of past epochs still coloring the 'water we swim in' (Pomeroy and Herrmann 2023) in schools' social fields today.

The more general point here is that conceptualizing and studying relational competence in the way it is contextually embedded, cultivated, and enacted illuminates the significance of habitus. The findings highlight the impact of the "embodied history, internalised as second nature and so forgotten as history" (Bourdieu 1998, pg. 56) on this process. It is crucial to understand how certain systemic and even historic factors counteract the desired display of relational competence and shifts in relational quality. Furthermore, it is even more important to understand how this habitus can be 'suspended' or changed. This understanding is also of practical value. Here, the findings shed some light on this change process. Like the findings by Laursen and Nielsen (2016), the educators in this study spoke of an ability to momentarily become aware of and 'bracket' or 'suspend' some portion of this habitus (Depraz et al. 2003) interacting with their students. The capacity to de-center or de-identify from the habitus was most poignantly exemplified by a teacher who spoke about *"my pedagogue"* as an inner voice or self-aspect and outlined how some of her basic professional beliefs about teaching shifted during the EMS training. Furthermore, the interviewed educators mentioned the intention to *"do it differently"* and a shift in the situational affordances which appeared to them as opportunities to enact change, rather than repeat the habitual way of operating. In line with what has been discussed above about re-perceiving, the outcome of this de-centering was described as a greater flexibility in switching between a pedagogical and a relational orientation.

The findings suggest that this ability was fostered by reflecting on their professional role and on the importance of the relationships to students, which turned the acquired habitus into objects of reflection. An important factor seemed to be that educators discerned espoused from enacted empathy and perceived some of their habitual reaction tendencies as inconsistent with their espoused values. Specifically, several interviewees mentioned the espoused belief of 'being empathic' as a typical characteristic among educators "*by virtue of their profession"* and depicted how EMS revealed a gap between these values and the interviewees' actual behavior in various instances in daily work. Thus, aspects of the interviewed educators' professional habitus appeared as detrimental to the relational quality with their students and were deconstructed during EMS. These educators became aware of a gap between 'espoused theory' and 'theory-in-use', using Argyris and Schön's (1992) terms, or 'mental models' (Senge 1990). It would be misleading to interpret these findings as individual shortcomings or traits. To the contrary, the findings rather indicate the educators' growing awareness of their habitus. Crucially, this awareness might be instrumental to 'upgrading' the pedagogical operating system. It may indicate a shift that is not limited to only espousing values like empathy but actually beings to change the 'theory-in-use'. In fact, many scholars argue that becoming aware of the habitual and taken-for-granted beliefs and habits guiding one's actions are an critical for organizational development (Argyris 1976; Scharmer 2009; Senge 1990), for adult cognitive development (Kegan 2018), and for teacher professional development (Korthagen 2017).

Attunement Brings Closeness and Requires Intention, the Suspension of Negative Other-Images, and Embodied Resonance

The significance of attunement for positive relationships to students and as core component of relational competence has been emphasized (Juul & Jensen 2002; Jensen, Skibsted & Christensen 2016; Aspelin & Jonsson 2018; Zins et al. 2004). Attunement was also a central theme across the findings of this study (Theme Relationship, Other, Motivation, Examples D, F, I, J). Specifically, it was found that educators illustrated taking care of their relationships to students by attuning to students' needs and emotions. The interviewed educators highlighted that attunement for the students' emotional needs was beneficial for the students emotionally and it improved the 'bond' between student and teacher (Aspelin and Jonsson 2018), bringing forth felt closeness and warmth as indicators of a positive relational climate (Hamre and Pianta 2001), well-being patterns of interactions, and even improved student outcomes. These shifts align well with a substantial body of research emphasizing the role of teacher attunement for the quality of the teacher-student relationship and student outcomes (Ang, 2005; Hamre & Pianta, 2001, 2005; Pianta et al. 2008, Hamre et al. 2013). Furthermore, the results correspond to findings that SEL interventions increase the self-reported social emotional competence in educators (Oliveira et al. 2021a).

Given these promising findings, it is crucial to scrutinize further how educators can meet students with greater attunement within the contexts of their daily work. Here, the study contributes to the larger field of research, providing detailed insights into educators' experiences of cultivating and enacting attunement. Specifically, the following aspects were thematized by the educators: a) intending to care for student and the relationship; b) interpreting children's behavior as indicators for the child's (relational or other) needs and for the status of the 'social bond'; c) suspending fixated negative interpretations of the child; and d) allowing oneself to be affected so as to become aware of the embodied resonance with the student.

The first aspect is intentionality. While intentionality could easily be overlooked, it is instrumental in turning the perceived situational affordances into invitations for attunement. For example, the educators in this study reported to attune to their students who were emotionally burdened, and when the educators sensed a 'lack of contact' with a student (examples A, B, D, F). These were examples when the educators intended to improve their relationship and help the students. The important role of intentionality has been highlighted by Nielsen & Laursen (2017) who reported that the participants of the 'rela' project engaged in 'intentional relationship-building' to improve difficult and build trusting relationships with students. Furthermore, intentionality was emphasized as a component of relational competence by Juul and Jensen's (2017) as the "desire to take full responsibility for the quality of the relation" (ibid. pg. 2). Intentionality may be crucial because attunement required prioritizing and taking the time for an individual child, slowing down, and sensing the present-moment responsivity in relation to a child. This involved the paradoxical effort of 'letting go' or 'suspending' the task-oriented mode of operating. Hence, a contextual view of relational competence must consider how educators can 'make the effort' of attuning to their students while coping with the systemic constraints of schooling and its competing demands and goals (e.g., getting the curriculum across). The discussion will return to this point in a later section.

Alongside intentionality, a second factor facilitating attunement was greater literacy concerning children's relational needs. This provided an altered cognitive frame for interpreting the students' emotional and behavioral expressions. Consider for instance

Example F, in which the teacher spoke about a pivotal 'aha-moment' during an EMS module. She realized that the behavior of a student which upset her, a second-grade students' repeatedly asking her for help to close his zipper, could also be seen as the child's expression of the need for a relationship to the teacher. Viewing the child from this lens, the teacher began to express her interest and care for the student, resulting in a "trusting relationship" which also impacted the boy's academic and social emotional development in class. Hence, enacting attunement hinged on a relational re-interpretation of the children's behavior as indicators for the status of the social bond, using Aspelin and Jonsson's (2019) terms. These findings thus emphasize the role of educators' ability for cognitive perspective-taking, suggesting that these skills can be improved when educators learn an applied understanding of children's attachment needs.

The third aspect concerns the mental image that educators formed of their students. Specifically, the findings of this study suggest that considering students' needs also involved the suspension of previously held, negative attributions to the students (e.g., taking their behavior personal). These shifts in the teacher's images of the students and in their affective stance may be instrumental in improving the social field. In fact, the impact which teachers' views have on student behavior and performance has been well-established within an early strand of educational research under topics such as a 'teacher expectancy effect' (Wang et al. 2018) or 'self-fulfilling prophecy' (Merton 1948; Rosenthal and Jacobson 1968). These findings emphasize that cultivating attunement does not 'start from scratch', but an educator enters into this process with already formed images of a child and attitudes or biases. Some of these images were revealed to be obstacles to attunement. Thus, attunement requires seeing students in nuanced ways as a legitimate other rather than reducing them sources of disturbing behavior (even if their behaviors in fact disturb the lesson).

Moreover, attunement was described to create closeness in the social field, also affecting the educators. For instance, the teacher in Example I described her affective responsivity and how meaningful it was that her student 'chose her' to develop a bond, feeling like *"a big piece of responsibility but also joy."* This willingness to let themselves be affected by their students is absent in any of the conceptualizations of relational competence, except for Nielsen and Petersen's (2021) notion of relational awareness. On a more general note, it has of course been well established that teacher-student relationships matter for teachers. Previous studies have shown that positive relationships with students are a major source of enjoyment (Hargreaves 2000) for teachers. However, the role of teacher's willingness to let themselves be affected so as to 'resonate' with a child is underexplored terrain. Biesta (2019) coined the term 'moments of hesitation', denoting the experience when an educator feels personally addressed by a child. In line with Biesta, the findings crucially highlight that attunement is not only child-centered. It also involves the educator's affective responsivity.

Thus, attunement should be conceived as a process embedded in the interaffectivity of a social field, requiring the willingness to let oneself be affected, an intentionality to care for the relationship or field, consideration of student needs, and suspending negative images of them.

Handling Conflicts by Constructing Self and Other as Different, yet Legitimate

In the context of daily work at school, educators are presented with the challenge of conflicts with students and sometimes also with parents (Aloe et al. 2014). Conflicts particularly call for

relational competence. The ability to cope constructively with conflicts has been subsumed under CASEL's relationship skills (Zins et al. 2004). The interviewed educators in this current study mentioned situations in which they were able to shift their responses to conflict situations in ways which were constructive and led to more collaboration and mutual respect. These accounts are in line with many components of relational competence mentioned in the literature. For example, Aspelin and Jonsson (2019) proposed that "the actions of teachers who possess relational competence encourage mutual understanding and respect in their encounters with students" (ibid. pg. 269).

Certainly, these findings do not suggest that handling conflicts in these ways is an easy process, but they provide valuable insights into concise and tangible factors that enable relational competence in conflict situations. These factors include owning the emotions which get evoked in these situations, and clearly and respectfully expressing to the students their own needs, boundary, or requests. The first factor of 'owning' seems to indicate self-regulation of the affective embodied responsivity evoked by the charged affordance. Hence, it corresponds to the role of educators' relational awareness in preventing destructive interaction cycles which has been discussed above. Obviously, this is highly relevant to prevent or transform escalating conflicts. Being aware of their felt responsivities seems to enable educators to de-couple from the field's autonomous, self-reinforcing patterns which otherwise lead to an escalation of destructive conflict behaviors and affects, such as blaming, aggression, attacking, or defending (Jennings and Greenberg 2009). The finding that educators spoke of 'owning' their emotions in conflict situations illustrates furthermore to what Jensen et al. (2015) propose as an important component of relational competence, namely, taking responsibility for 'one's own part of the relationship'. Educators notice their own emotions and reaction tendencies and see themselves as accountable for them (e.g., example A and B) thereby de-coupling their response from their immediate reaction. Here, reperceiving (Shapiro et al. 2006) seems to work synergistically with educators' re-appraisal of who is accountable for their emotions and an intention to treat themselves and the other respectfully. In 'owning' their own emotions, instead of seeing the students as the source of their own affective charge, a subtle differentiation may already create more degrees of freedom for a de-escalation and mutual understanding.

This also seems to play a role in enabling educators to shift the way they communicated with students, which is a second factor found in this study. For instance, instead of disciplining a student perceived to disturb the lesson, an educator would speak about herself, 'revealing' her own need in the situation such as a personal, momentary capacity and willingness to tolerate noise in the classroom, furthermore, she actively took care of her needs, for instance, by asking the student to be quiet. The affective 'tone' of these expressions was described to shift from an affectively charged 'outburst' towards a calmer and respectful tone. In reflecting on these situations, educators reasoned that it might have been the fact that they 'spoke about themselves' which contributed to the collaborative, accepting response by the students.

One way to interpret this finding would be that educators became more personally 'visible' or 'tangible' for students by showing their own need, instead of acting from a habitual teacher role. Juul and Jensen (2017) coined the term 'personal language', to denote a way of expressing oneself that aims for maximum coherence between verbal and nonverbal expressions as well as between self and other, by expressing own feelings in connection with the other as well as using personal "I-voice" sentences. This corresponds to Aspelin and Jonsson's (2019) concept of 'differentiation competence.' Enacting relational competence in a conflict situation appears as an opportunity for both parties to "discern themselves as

individuals" (ibid. pg. 269) which might in fact repair and stabilize the 'bond' between teacher and student and in the long run, create more collaborative social fields which 'hold' conflicts in generative ways. The insights from this study can inspire a conceptual refinement of teacher's conflict competences, which are highly important given the fact that conflictual teacher-student-relationships are a major source of stress for teachers (Spilt et al 2011) and students.

How to Sustain the Shifts

Relational competence is easier said than done. Mission statements in schools and districts and other guiding principles like the OECD learning compass (OECD 2019), tend to espouse values of community and empathy which are hard to disagree on due to their social desirability, sometimes similar to the research literature definitions of relational competence. It is easy to *espouse* these values for as long as they remain unspecific. However, zeroing in on what it takes to *enact* them, this study showed how demanding this can be. This may explain why arguably, the theoretically and socially desired relational competences and qualities such as empathic attunement are less often realized in practice than they would be needed (Roorda et al. 2011). Here, another feature of the findings appears to provide insight into the obstacles to relational competence. It seems significant to notice that many of the abovementioned factors or embedded micro-actions revolve around the educator's self, such as becoming aware of the responsivities they feel in their bodies or notice in their thinking process, 'owning' and regulating their affective reaction tendencies, and knowing and expressing their own needs, or boundaries. Hence, they highlight the role of 'self' in the process. This role has previously been mentioned by some conceptualizations of relational competence or social emotional learning (Jensen et al. 2015; Juul and Jensen 2017; Zins et al. 2004). However, it seems that 'self' has some wider implications for enacting relational competence and its obstacles.

An important finding here is that educators were surprised about the EMS program's focus on themselves. Accordingly, 'self' in education has been termed a "null curriculum" (Ergas 2017). Null curriculum refers to the observation that the habitual attentional focus at school is exclusively outward-oriented, be it on the teaching content or on students and teachers, respectively. Strikingly, the educators here spoke about *"being allowed to have a focus on myself"* during the EMS modules. Ergas (2017) argues that despite some pedagogical approaches and theorists encouraging teachers to be 'personal' or 'themselves' while teaching, this is in fact undermined by a widespread assumption about education: "Teachers may feel that they need to hide the vulnerability and vagueness of self" (ibid. pg. 221). He argues that due to the standardized practices in education, teachers' professionalism is understood to necessitate "the facade of authoritative sureness" (Ergas 2017, pg. 221). This brings back the impact of 'habitus' which, as mentioned above may prevent the focus on an individual child. Now, it becomes clear that this issue is not limited to educators' view of children but that it concerns educators themselves, too. A habitus preventing teachers from turning their attention towards their own personal selves will inadvertently limit their relational competence. Conventional professionalism that demands hiding the personal vague self is conflictive with the embodied and necessarily 'personal' resonance needed for attuned

relationships to each individual child. Furthermore, expressing personal needs, boundaries, and limitations is a constructive alternative to damaging the social bond by reprimanding students. It requires to acknowledge one's personal and vulnerable, i.e., imperfect, self which is not the same as sharing issues from one's private lives. It can be labelled as a 'personal-professional' approach as opposed to private-personal (Juul und Jensen 2017).

Thus, enacting relational competence requires an emancipation from these conventions and a construction of new ones (Juul and Jensen 2017) that allow educators to 'appear as legitimate self in co-existence with another' – to slightly adapt Maturana & Verden Zoellner (2012) – so as to realize qualities of 'relational bonding' (Aspelin 2017a) by showing care and respect for self and other.

Scrutinizing this obstacle also provides insights into how it can be overcome. Self-compassion (Neff 2003) may be an important support for crossing the threshold from re-producing a self-nullifying habitus towards showing up with relational competence. More specifically, self-compassion may help to a) stay with the discomfort elicited by the gap between espoused and enacted values, b) become familiar with vague and vulnerable feelings and needs and learn to "own" and take care of them, c) also become aware of relational responsivities or 'status of the social bond' during interactions, and further, d) express these recognized and legitimized needs as clear and respectful requests, and e) meet others' emotions and needs in the same legitimizing and attuned way.

To conclude with, this study has shown that cultivating and learning to enact relational competence in an embodied manner involves targeted, embedded, embodied, and enacted micro-efforts co-initiating shifts in the social field between educators and students.

With the themes discussed under the previous headlines, the study makes a genuine contribution to the discourse on relational competence, shedding light on factors required to enact this competence. Consider for example the recognition of being caught in degenerative interaction cycles, and the suspension of behaviors fueling these cycles. From perspective on the real-life challenges of educators, this is arguably an important capacity to improve relational quality and prevent harm. Importantly, the discussed factors emphasize that relational competence is not only about when the relationship is generative and mutually beneficial but about what to learn and shift when it is not. Thereby, the identified factors bridge the gap between a substantial body of research emphasizing how important positive relationships are for learning and health, and educators' practice within the real conditions they work in. It is worth mentioning that the bigger part of these shifts seemed to depend on educators' selves, their attention, their affect, etc. which reportedly 'shifted' towards more attunement during the EMS modules. Importantly, the findings also highlighted that such micro-level changes needed external support from the intervention of the EMS project (discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.5.1.) and from the school community (Jennings and Greenberg 2009, Mahfouz et al. 2019). Therefore, the following chapters will discuss findings concerning the developments during EMS in the social fields at a meso-level within each school.

6.3.2. Social Field Shifts (Meso-Level)

The longitudinal findings from the three schools over 1.5 years demonstrate that the EMS program interacted in complex ways with the prevailing patterns of interactions and interaffectivity within the social fields of the three school faculties. Some schools reported disruptions of relational stabilities, while others experienced shifts from cynicism to empathy, or a lack of tangible change. These findings provide further insight into the relevance of the context of each school, including the persistence and malleability of the social field.

Due to the issues of burnout and other health issues and teacher retention rates, improving the social fields at schools at a meso-level (usually studied under terms like school faculty climate) needs to become a priority (Collie et al. 2012; Hascher and Waber 2021). In this regard, promising changes have been reported in some cases, particularly, shifts from stress contagion to self-regulation. The significance of these findings is underscored by a study suggesting that interactions among educators proliferate burnout (Meredith et al. 2020). Educators' grounding, mindfulness, and self-care, as well as an empathic attunement for colleagues appear as factors that may very support burnout prevention not just individually (Oliveira et al. 2021b), but on the level of the social field. Here, supportive interaction cycles, like meeting vulnerability with compassion and a culture of self-care (Altner et al. 2018) may crucially foster collective well-being and job motivation. Similarly, a large-scale mindfulness study found that mindfulness interventions improved school climate (Kuyken et al. 2022). This may also support teacher-student relationships and classroom fields, given findings about spillovers from meso- to micro-levels that correspond well with previous research (Oberle and Schonert-Reichl 2016). By doing so, the faculty climate can become a resource of support and learning that propagates qualities like kindness or curiosity (Boell & Senge 2016), rather than tension or cynicism, creating work conditions conducive to relational competence and educator health (Rothland 2005; Shapka 2012; Meredith et al. 2020).

It is worth mentioning that the schools revealed striking differences in developments of their faculty fields, suggesting that school-specific factors and initial conditions significantly impact their course of climate development. From a social fields perspective, these factors may be conceived as the 'malleability' of the schools' social fields with respect to EMS. Malleability could be understood as determining the potential of shifting a social field with a given intervention, hence denoting a relevant success factor for any relational competence program. In the more malleable faculty fields, shifts were reported to be widely absorbed as a new 'default mode'. For example, the faculty initially marked by a cynical attitude was reported to show compassion instead more readily. The EMS program tangibly impacted on this field due to its malleability. By contrast, the same cannot be said about the school field marked by a persistent blaming/defending. Shifts were described, but only momentarily. It appears that the field readily returned to its dominant autonomous mode of operating. These persistent autonomous patterns of interactions were widely established in the schools' fields. For example, the pattern of blaming / defending was described on various systems levels of the school, between students and teachers, among colleagues, with parents, and between faculty and leadership. Malleability may be impacted by various factors including leadership

behavior (Berkovich & Eyal 2015) (see Chapter 6.5.3.). However, even at schools where school leaders attempt to embody and role-model qualities such as attunement in their actions and seek to establish structures promoting positive climate, the social fields display a complex course of development. This emphasizes the need for further research on malleability and the cultivation of generative social fields at a school level (see Chapter 6.4.1). Attempting to refine the concept of generative social fields based on the findings of this study, the next chapter advances towards this kind of research.

6.3.3. Generative Social Fields

This thesis contributes to the notion of 'generative social fields' on the one hand conceptually, proposing the three basic properties of intercorporeality, affordance, and autonomy (Pomeroy and Herrmann 2023). On the other hand, initial empirical insights are provided into the qualities of generative social fields. The study reconstructed various micro- and meso- field shifts in the context of the EMS project showing that fields of rejection, defending, blaming, or resisting against the other, and negative affect contagion were transformed into collaboration, attunement, and differentiation, as well as affective self- and co-regulation. Holding these findings up against the literature on generative social fields (Boell and Senge 2017; Scharmer 2009; Scharmer and Kaufer 2013; Senge et al. 2019; Senge et al. 2004; Siegel 2019; Siegel 2020) sheds light on the proposed qualities of connectedness and integration but remains inconclusive regarding creativity and propagation.

Connectedness

The interviewed educators described change moments towards a increased connectedness within the social fields in the classroom and in relation to individual students, parents, and colleagues. For example, expressions were used such as *"getting into contact",* building a *"trusting relationship",* or being *"closer with the child."*

Examples for field shifts towards increased connectedness comprised:

- From "educator's lowering expectation / student's showing less distress" to "educator's attuning / student's learning to regulate"
- From "educator's rejecting / student's asking for contact" to "educator's showing interest and understanding / student's asking for contact"
- From "educators' cynicism / educators' avoiding vulnerability" to "educator's compassionate listening / educators' showing vulnerability"

Shifts towards greater connectedness were crucially enabled by educators' relational awareness and attunement. For example, by attuning to students' feelings and needs instead of ignoring them, and by listening to colleagues with sensitivity and compassion instead of warding off their vulnerability through cynicism. Furthermore, ubiquitous barriers to connectedness were revealed. Among them, behaviors and attitudes that were internalized

as habitus played a pivotal role. For example, an exclusive focus on lesson content prevented registering and responding to students' feelings. Furthermore, a tendency of taking student behavior personally was described as an obstacle for attunement. Consequently, it is not sufficient for interventions to proclaim and espouse positive and close relationships or generative social fields in schools as desired aims. Rather, the barriers to their arising need to be recognized, understood, and mitigated.

The social fields perspective developed in this study contends that attunement involves an embodied resonance between the educator and the student, parent, or colleague, described for instance as a *"warm bond"* with a positive affective tone such as *"joy."* Alongside positive affectivity, the connective shifts reportedly improved the collaboration with parents and students as well as student self-regulation and learning. For example, the educators reporting enhanced connectedness with students also mentioned an improved ability to *"transport"* their teaching (*"better access"*) to the students. This finding concurs with a substantial body of research on the teacher-student relationship (Nordenbo et al. 2008). A mechanism may be that an enhanced connectedness in the social field between educator and student increases their synchrony, purportedly supporting the teaching process (Hu et al. 2022). Moreover, this finding may be due to a shift on the student's side. Increased connectedness within the social field may nourish and provide the students with a sense of belonging and safety, fostering their exploration and learning (Pianta et al. 2003). Hence, students' capacity to receive and process the teaching content may get strengthened, establishing a virtuous reinforcing loop.

More generally, the findings support the idea that 'connective' field shifts become self-sustaining, creating the conditions for their own further arising. In line with studies showing that positive relationships are crucial for teachers' job motivation (Hargreaves 2000), a virtuous reinforcing loop may be established, motivating the educators' further engagement in the attitudes and practices that foster connectedness. Similarly, Maturana & Verden-Zoellner (2012) argued that there are relational behaviors that bring about the conditions for their own continuing arising. Put simply, educator's attuned, caring, or compassionate behaviors can evoke a field autonomy wherein the educators, students, and parents feel drawn to mutually reciprocating positive and maybe complementary behaviors and attitudes. Hence, the quality of connectedness contributes to generative social fields in such a way that they can become self-reinforcing.

Integration

The educators referred to the quality of integration using expressions like being *"on an eye-level"* with one another or focusing on *"the individual child"* instead of merely on the class as whole (at the expense of seeing the individual). Integration afforded meeting oneself and the other in a *"more personal"* and *"respectful"* way through which self and other arose as legitimate part(ner)s of the relationship, as described in shifts like:

- From "Belonging through homogeneity / Avoiding conflicts (until they escalate)" to "Learning to acknowledge differences / Learning to express differences (less severely)"
- From "Disciplining / Resisting" to "Expressing own boundary / Accepting boundary"
- From "Requesting implicity / Rejecting" to "Requesting explicitly / Collaborating"

Integrative shifts in the social fields were mentioned after conflicts had ruptured the 'social bond', inviting the acknowledgement of the differences leading to the conflict, and re-establishing connection (see examples A, E, F, I, J). The educators spoke of examples such as a student's tendency to chat and move during class that conflicts with the educators' goal of a focused atmosphere. Here, integration comprised acknowledging different and conflictive behaviors and needs, i.e., differentiation, as well as staying with (and despite) these difficulties in a collaborative relationship, i.e., linkage (Siegel 2020). Integration afforded confronting these differences rather than denying them, attuning both to the other and oneself. An interviewed school leader mentioned experiencing an increased capacity to address conflictive issues before they escalated, resulting in a felt sense of *"solidity"* within the social field.

The findings substantiate Siegel's (2020) conceptualization of generative social fields being marked by integration. Importantly, there is an overlap with the notion of connectedness. More precisely, integration is a higher-order quality comprising a process of connecting the parts of a system while retaining – or even developing – their differentiation rather than dissolving or merging them.

Additionally, the educators portrayed differentiation as a prerequisite for attunement. For instance, the field shift Example D illustrated that emotionally co-regulating a desperate student required attuning to the child's momentary emotions in an *"individualized"*, i.e., differentiated, fashion and that treating the child based on habitual roles of teacher and student was insufficient. One could say that the autonomy of the social field coupled the attuning to another's differentiated expression with feeling seen and taken care of, bringing more of oneself to bear in these interactions (see theme Self).

Alongside the inter-personal level, integration was also described intra-personally, e.g., in the form of 'de-centering' from one's habitus. For instance, Linda spoke of *"my pedagogue"* as an inner self-aspect, i.e., she differentiated herself from habitus. The differentiation should not be confused with fragmentation. For example, Linda did not dismiss the habitus and its adaptive function entirely. Rather, she integrated the differentiated habitus and her emerging relational orientation fostered by the EMS training. Hence, one can speak of Linda's redefinition of her professional attitude as intrapersonal integration.

Taken together, these findings support Siegel's (2019; 2020) proposition that in a generative social field, intra- and interpersonal integration reinforce each other (see themes Self and Relationship). When educators shifted towards an intra-personal state of integration, they

acted in ways which brought their professional values, their own needs, and their attunement to other into coherence (Example J, F, B). Simultaneously, the social field became integrative, flexibly containing the interpersonal differences while maintaining the connection – instead of either escalating into conflicts or denying the differences.

Thus, just like affective and physiological states, social fields may propagate the quality of integration. Integration may be a 'fractal' feature of generative social fields characterizing many layers of a field and propagating both within and between the actors.

Propagation

Besides being connected and integrative, generative social fields have also been proposed to propagate, i.e., the positive qualities of these social fields multiply and extend into across a system. Conceptually, this idea overlaps to some degree with the phenomenological notion of a social field's autonomy, which reproduces certain patterns of interactions and interaffectivity. However, autonomy as conceptualized in this study applies both to generative and de-generative and all other sorts of social fields, since it seen as one of their basic properties which justifies speaking of fields in the first place. In fact, the findings in this study suggest that both the stressful and de-generative as well as the creative, and integrative fields can have a propagating quality to them. For instance, the interviewed educators provided several examples of stress contagion, but also examples of a contagious 'integration' and compassion. Importantly, these phenomena were explicitly described to propagate beyond certain system boundaries and levels, e.g., moods from private life at home get transferred to school and vice versa or the mood among faculty is transferred to the classroom (see meso-level theme 3). The findings concur with a report by the generative social fields initiative (Boell et al. 2018) proposing that

> "Generative social fields can take multiple forms, where mass-hysteria is an example of the one end of the spectrum and unbounded love and compassion of the other." (pg. 13)

By contrast, the approach of this thesis suggests that rather than being limited to generative social fields, autonomy is a defining feature of social fields as such. Hence, the findings in this study do not necessarily support the view that a propagating quality as such can be seen as a characteristic which is unique to generative social fields. Regardless of these conceptual questions, social fields appear to differ in the intensity of their autonomy and their propagating quality. Hence, this points to a phenomenon deserving of further conceptual refinement and empirical investigation.

Creativity

Creativity and learning have been suggested as major outcomes of generative social fields, for example as novelty and emergence arising from a social field (Scharmer 2009). The EMS project focused on the relational competence and did not aim to foster creativity by any narrow (artistic or creative thinking) definition, nor was the project designed for emergence

on an organizational level. However, the change moments did involve aspects of what may be termed a 'relational creativity'. There was an interesting example in the data of an educator repurposing school infrastructure during a reported change moment, described as breaking out of the imagined confinement to the classroom. Motivated to seek new ways of soothing a desperate student, Franziska allowed a student to rest outside the classroom in the hallway. Here, creativity manifested as a shift in the affordance of the context features. Moreover, shifts in the teachers' professional stance and in their attitude towards the school system may indicate creativity in the sense of a higher degree of freedom and flexibility in conceiving their profession and its larger circumstances. The same may be said about the emergence of new patterns of interactions in various layers of the social field. To conclude with, creativity was not reported as re-building structures or other material outcomes but on a relational level.

6.4. Research Suggestions

6.4.1. Social Fields

Social fields have garnered increasing interest, evidenced by the formation of the Systems Awareness Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2023 and the launch of the Journal of Awareness-Based Systems Change in 2018, both explicitly dedicated to social fields research. This study aimed to contribute to this wider research agenda by proposing the three generic properties that characterize and give rise to social fields, intercorporeality, autonomy, and affordance, and, secondly, by using these concepts to reconstruct field shifts based on data collected during the EMS program.

Importantly, these contributions must be seen as initial steps that were limited in several ways and will hopefully be refined, critiqued, and extended by future research. Therefore, the following suggestions address the nascent discipline of social fields research.

Multiple Actors' Perspectives

This study reconstructed field shifts based on the leaders' and educators' accounts of dyadic interactions with students and parents as well as developments within the faculty. Educators' perspectives are crucial because it is an integral part of their profession to shape the relationships at school (Juul and Jensen 2017). However, the perspectives of parents and in particular of students are pivotal as well and they should also be investigated. It is important for future research to collect data from the multiple actors involved to illuminate the multiplicity of intertwined experiences in a social field.

For example, future research could address the issue in a quasi-experimental design, focusing on the occurrence of a tangible atmospheric shift in a group or an organization during an intervention like EMS. It seems favorable to let the actors in the field themselves choose a shift that was significant to them. In close temporal proximity to the event, post-hoc interviews with multiple actors in the social field could be conducted. The interviews can

comprise both micro-phenomenologically inspired interviews (Petitmengin 2006) with individual actors and focus groups engaging actors in "sensing" of the social field by recollecting their felt sense of the group's affordances or atmosphere, or a combination thereof (see suggestions by Nielsen method paper). Combining individual and collective data collection fosters the comprehensive investigation of the shift's lived experience and interaction dynamics.

Data analysis can be based on the field shift analysis framework developed for this study. In addition to the steps proposed and carried out to reconstruct each actors' account, another step would be to reconstruct the kaleidoscopic intertwinement between the actors' impressions and expressions. Again, the assumption is that this intertwinement may possess a degree of autonomy. Hence, to understand a social field's autonomy, it is crucial to focus on the 'quality' or 'intensity' of these intertwinements or couplings. Importantly, the task here is not to revert to a simple linear model ('person A's action x caused in person B the impression y') but reconstruct the co-emergence that happens in the field ('the way persons A and B mutually influenced each other through their expressions and impressions is co-shaped by the autonomous field thereby created'). Hence, seeing through the kaleidoscope of multiple actors' intertwined experiences would enable studying how the field's affordances – as experienced individually by each actor – coalesce into patterns of interaction binding the actors' expressions and impressions. Furthermore, it enables exploring the conditions contributing to (shifts in) these intertwinements. More rigorous research will support the cultivation of generative social fields.

Temporal Granularity

To study social fields, and particularly their autonomy and intercorporeality, it seems advisable to collect data varying in temporal granularity. Therefore, integrating a variety of data collection methods and data types holds a promising potential for future research. For example, collecting video data would enrich and facilitate the precise and fine-grained study of field shifts, providing information about the process with a high temporal granularity (Stern 2004). Due to privacy regulations in the Berlin school system, video recording was not feasible in this thesis, but it should be employed in future research. Micro-scopic relational analysis (Aspelin 2022) has been proposed as method to analyze the moment-to-moment interactions between educators and students based on video and observational data. The 'third-person' micro-scopic relational analysis could specifically focus on the observable aspects of the actors' intercorporeality during an interaction such as shifts in the tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures and bodily movements. But video data could also improve the understanding of the 'first-person' lived experience of field shifts. In video-based event reconstruction interviews, the video footage serves as a prompt for the informants' recall of their lived experience during the passage, potentially enhancing the validity of their accounts. Furthermore, it allows to interview multiple actors in a detailed manner about precise moments in an interaction improving the reconstruction of the field autonomy. Triangulating between third-person video- and first-person interview-data from multiple actors' accounts may enable the reliable, multi-perspectival reconstruction of the social field's

intercorporeality, autonomy, and affordances before, during, and after a salient shift. Additionally, it may illuminate the field shifts' intercorporeal layers that cannot be readily verbalized in post-hoc interviews.

Physiological Couplings

Additionally, in a transdisciplinary approach, phenomenological and observational data collection should be paired with assessing (neuro-)physiological parameters. A field's intercorporeality is hypothesized to have 'physiological footprints' as for instance identified in the classroom by Oberle and Schonert-Reichl (2016) in relation to stress contagion. Additionally, the study's reconstructed field shifts comprised phenomena that would be expected to correlate with measurable changes in physiological markers such as improved intra-personal affective self-regulation, interpersonal co-regulation, and sharing of positive interaffectivity (Koole and Tschacher 2016). This corresponds to the more general hypothesis that generative social fields are expected to contribute to health and well-being, with a potential for tangible physiological changes (Siegel 2020). Therefore, transdisciplinary social fields research should illuminate both physiology and phenomenology of social fields. In fact, triangulating the two could enhance each other. Parallel to the discipline of neurophenomenology which aims at the complementarity between 'first-person' lived experience and 'third-person' brain activity (Varela 1996), here the focus would be on the physiological footprint of the shifts and qualities of social fields such as their degree of connectedness, integration, or creativity. Methodological advancements such as wearables provide the opportunity to scientifically capture the physiological couplings that occur in a social field (Bevilacqua et al. 2019; Dikker et al. 2017), thereby shedding light on the field's intercorporeality which can be notoriously difficult or even impossible to verbalize. Conversely, making sense of the complex physiological data of real-world interactions in dyads, groups, or organizations may require a more thorough understanding of the (inter-)actors lived experience. Here, the precise descriptions of experiential aspects elicited by the phenomenological interviews used in this study may substantially support the interpretation of physiological data.

The transdisciplinary approach to the study of social fields can contribute to important conceptual and practical outcomes, providing insight into the interplay between social field quality and its members' physiology, and the physiological impact of targeted interventions.

Oscillating Between Systems-Levels

The study focused specifically on the social fields at a micro- and meso-level. Most of the shifts were described on the micro-level in dyads or classroom settings since this had been the focus point of the EMS intervention. Hence, it was not possible to study changes at scale, on a macro-level, nor the interactions between these system-levels. This would be necessary though, if innovations like the EMS program should truly bring about improvements for educators and students on a larger scale. Furthermore, the macro-level conditions were named by some participants in the study as factors inhibiting relationship quality. It was

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beyond the scope of the study to examine whether and how (changes in) these systemic conditions would indeed affect relationship quality.

Future research should additionally focus on shifts in various sizes and types of social formations. Specifically, a transdisciplinary approach should aim at integrating data from various systems levels. For example, mapping social field shifts in terms of indicators like social network connectivity, while investigating the phenomenology of these networks at relevant 'nodes' by interviewing actors. A similar approach (Kurtz and Snowden 2003) combines complexity science with qualitative data.

Linking Research with Practice

Social fields research could be crucially advanced by creating a reinforcing feedback loop between research, building the collective capacity to sense social fields through mindfulness and other practices, and the domain of practice and application in the workplace (see Pomeroy & Herrmann 2023). The following steps were suggested as examples of cultivating awareness of the social field in the context of organizational change, further fueling the research process:

- "Incorporating mindfulness into the change process to encourage presence and attention, which are prerequisites for discerning the quality of the social field.

- integrating dialogue into the intervention to bring the qualities mentioned above— presence and attention—to relationships and relating.

- integrating collective somatic practices into the intervention to draw attention to the intercorporeal nature of organizational life and to incorporate the somatic knowledge into the organization's understanding of itself.

- providing space and process for actors to explore the conditions which lead to social field shifts in their organization, the impact of such shifts (i.e., the types and qualities of interaction and communication which people feel drawn into, inspired by, or suffer from) and how to cultivate different and desired outcomes." (ibid. pg.17).

The act of collecting data about the nature of the field—through dialogue and collective somatic practices, for example—simultaneously builds the capacity of those involved to sense and discern the field, integrating research and capacity-building.

6.4.2. Relational Competence

The approach of this study, viewing relational competence as embedded in a social field, contributes to a more precise, contextual understanding of enacting relational competence – along with its barriers. Hence, the abovementioned suggestions for social fields research apply as well to the study of relational competences. Future research should take up this

approach, criticize it and further refine it. In addition to what has been outlined above, some suggestions are presented as follows.

The study identified several embedded processes of enacting relational competence which should be further scrutinized, both empirically and conceptually. These processes included a) intending to care for child and the relationship; b) becoming aware of the embodied resonance between educator and child; c) interpreting children's behavior as indicators for the child's (relational or other) needs and for the status of the field in a way which constructs the child as a legitimate actor in the field; d) suspending fixated negative interpretations of the child; and e) acting on this felt resonance and interpretation. This research strand should closely illuminate factors that prevent and enable teachers from these processes, for example, from de-centering and transforming their habitus. Here, also systemic and contextual factors should be accounted for since they may be reinforcing undesired behaviors. Importantly, teachers' constantly conflicting demands need to be considered, such as academic achievement, getting their curriculum content across and the motivation to build relationships. A complexity view conceives these factors as potential 'attractors' suggesting the following research questions that may be critical in understanding how to shift towards enacting relational competences:

> "What are the typical attractors of the focal level dynamics? Under what conditions is each attractor dominant for the (sub-) system? How do new attractors emerge over the history of the system's development and the evolution of this kind of system?" (Lemke and Sabelli 2008, pg. 116-117)

Each factor identified in this study can be examined using these questions. For example, in how far do behaviors that appear as damaging to the relationship nevertheless serve incentive structures, the 'rules of the game' (Nolan 2012), of schooling. Thereby, the systemic conditions can be revealed that need to be changed to promote positive relationships.

Furthermore, the study found that educators' cultivation process appears to be facilitated by 'holding spaces' for inquiring into their lived experience. Future research could be embedded in similar cultivation programs like EMS utilizing a methodology that aligns well the reciprocity in a social field – participatory action research (McIntyre 2007). For example, after completing the training modules, participants including educators and school leaders could begin defining the desired outcomes and research questions concerning the continuing implementation process. Presumably, this may foster ownership over the research process and counteract the often-disempowered habitus within a strictly hierarchical system where programs are perceived to be prescribed 'from above'. Here, several factors identified in this study could come to bear: Firstly, a significant portion of relational competence involves an emancipation from habitus. Secondly, this process could make relational competence a strategic priority on the level of the whole school, identifying, establishing, and improving support structures. Research outcomes may provide further insight into factors helping and hindering the implementation.

6.5. Practical Implications

Various practical suggestions for the promotion of relational competence are implied within the findings. They will be outlined in the following four sections, firstly discussing the role of the EMS project in eliciting these processes, secondly, the implications for educators, thirdly, implementing whole-school programs, and fourthly, for systems change in education.

The first section focuses on the intervention itself, discussing the processes set in motion by the intervention and their alignment with the program goals. The findings from research on the EMS project provide relevant insights for the practice of educators in general. Therefore, suggestions of how individual educators can begin to improve their relationships with students or parents are provided. However, it is important not to 'individualize' the relational challenges encountered by the educators and make them responsible for issues that are systemic in nature (Ergas 2019). Importantly, the learning process supporting educators to improve their relationships requires a 'holding space', such as a successful program implementation which will be discussed in the third section. That said, even the best programs are constrained by the systemic conditions. Implications on a systems level will be discussed in the fourth section.

6.5.1. The EMS-Project

The study provided insights into the processes that were set in motion by the complex interplay between EMS, the actors in the schools, and the social fields they were embedded in and enact within their daily work. In this chapter, these findings will be interpreted with respect to the intervention itself, the EMS project.

To begin with, it is worth pointing out that the goal of this study was not to evaluate the outcomes of the EMS intervention but to illuminate these complex processes. Specifically, the study shed light on the lived experience of multiple school professionals as they participated in the EMS program and put the program into practice. Here, the interviewed professionals from all three schools provided detailed accounts of experiencing improvements in the social fields on various levels including interactions with individual students, the class, parents, and with colleagues. Moreover, enhanced generative qualities were described, such as connectedness and integration.

When discussing the role of EMS, it is of major significance that the educators explicitly attributed these improvements to the EMS program, viewing them as examples of their ability to successfully enact learnings from the program. The reported improvements appear to be largely consistent with the program goal of promoting relational competence (Juul and Jensen 2017). The reports of enhanced self-compassion, of enacting a capacity to disrupt habitual reactions and instead foster attunement to students, of improved relationships with individual students and parents, etc., can be reasonably interpreted as signaling the cultivation of relational competence.

Moreover, during the interviews the educators contrasted these experienced shifts with their previous behavioral strategies, and they also mentioned cases where they were not successful in enacting changes. Their detailed accounts and the fact that educators also mentioned the difficulties within this process (discussed in Chapter 6.5.3.) increases the trustworthiness of the data.

But what about EMS and the interplay with the educators may have facilitated the reported social field shifts and the development of relational competences? While a full-blown discussion of the active ingredients of the EMS project is beyond the scope of this thesis, some relevant factors were alluded to by the interviewed educators. Despite not being asked about the EMS modules directly, the interviewees nevertheless referred to these experiences when reflecting on the change moments. They mentioned insights (*"aha-moments"*) about relational dynamics with individual students, changed perspectives on their professional role and habitus, and a more compassionate relationship with themselves, characterizing their own process during EMS as a flourishing of kindness and care for their needs. Taken together, this indicates that EMS initiated a reflective (Korthagen 2017) personal-professional and relational (Juul and Jensen 2017) development for these educators. It is worth mentioning that the educators spoke about feeling met with attunement and empathy during the EMS modules, portraying the modules as both relaxing and rewarding, with a kind and warm atmosphere, supportive of emotionally challenging processes that were evoked due to *"an incredible focus on you personally."* Hence, cultivating relational competence might be crucially enabled by creating the conditions where educators themselves experience what it is like to be attuned to, and where they can attune to each other. This and other factors supportive of the implementation of whole-school programs will be further elaborated on in chapter 6.5.3.

At the school and faculty level, findings from the EMS project were more diverse (see also Chapter 6.3.2.). It appears that there was significant variation in the processes set in motion within the faculties, also comprising differences in the schools' implementation of EMS. This contrasts with the more consistent reports of improvements on the micro-level. Apparently, the EMS program affected the individual educators and the social fields at a micro-level more consistently in terms of its desired goals than the schools' organizational climates. This discrepancy is congruent with the EMS project's prioritizing of the cultivation of relational competence in educators. However, it raises the question of whether the program implementation could be enhanced by directly and explicitly addressing the meso-level. For example, this could be done by including components in the program that work with the organizational climate and faculty dynamics within a whole-school organizational development process, which may also involve a diagnosis of the meso-level conditions prior to the engagement (see Chapter 6.3.2.). These and other implications for implementation are further discussed in chapter 6.5.3.

Concluding, the EMS program appears to have initiated personal-professional development processes for educators and shifts towards more generative fields, primarily, on a micro-level

between educators and students as well as parents. Findings of mixed developments at a meso-level highlight the significance of context factors for the project implementation.

6.5.2. Educators

The findings of this study emphasized various strategies supporting educators in improving their relationships with students, parents, and themselves. The findings are from the context of a supportive program (EMS), and it should be noted that this is not just an individual responsibility, a supportive 'system' can be crucial (elaborated below). A key ingredient is for educators to learn that taking their own well-being seriously is a first step to improve the quality of the social field. While educators may feel pressured by their professional tasks, prioritizing the cultivation of compassion and care for themselves is an essential step towards improving their relationships and setting limits to over-commitments. To do so, cultivation practices and brief mindfulness exercises appear useful to regulate stress and negative affect.

Additionally, it appears to be fruitful when educators begin to regard themselves as a legitimate part of the relationship to their students. This includes their personal boundaries, needs, and their professional goals (Juul and Jensen 2017). Even though including their personhood in their professionalism may be counterintuitive to many educators, contradicting ingrained assumptions about needs and feelings being 'unprofessional' (Ergas 2017), it nevertheless has various advantages. Firstly, it supports educators to demonstrate their personal boundaries to the students by speaking about themselves without blaming the students, fostering students' acceptance and collaboration, and contributing to trusting relationships. Secondly, including personal needs also fosters role-modeling self-regulation, for example, by using exercises and games to regulate the activation and relaxation of educators themselves and students. Such games help calming down when feeling stressed or to getting more active when feeling tired in the classroom, fostering a positive classroom climate. Additionally, awareness and acceptance of own needs and feelings may also enhance the ability to attune to students, recognizing the needs underlying their behaviors. This process comprises crucial steps such as the intention to care for the relationship quality, becoming aware of the resonance that educators feel in relation to students, allowing themselves to be affected, and recognizing the impact that their actions and expressions have on students and the interaction process. Crucially, negative attributions and images of a 'disruptive' student must be suspended since they may turn into self-fulfilling prophecies. A difficult task for educators here is 'owning' and self-regulating the emotions evoked during a challenging interaction with a student or a parent. Regardless of how difficult this may be, it is a necessary factor to improve challenging relationships. One way of supporting this ability is by engaging in cultivation practices regularly (Schussler et al. 2016). Another is the regular and empathic exchange with colleagues about their challenges and successes to promote self-reflection.

Taken together, these suggestions begin to define the contours of a professional attitude that could be termed a 'relational learner' – one that seeks to navigate the social fields, cultivate generative qualities, and promote well-being and learning of all actors, over time growing

own relational competence and self-accord. This is easier said than done, but educators generally have some degrees of freedom to take these steps within their classroom. However, it may also require seeking (or co-creating) a school and faculty environment that is supportive of such an attitude culturally and structurally. Hence, further implications of these findings will be discussed as follows.

6.5.3. Whole-School Program Implementation

The findings of this study on the EMS program shed light on the implementation of whole-school programs targeting relational competence and well-being. A crucial learning from this study is that the 'relational learning' process that educators undergo to embody a more attuned stance towards students and themselves is an effort that itself requires support. The micro-level findings demonstrate clearly that becoming aware of the 'felt responsivities' which get evoked in an interaction can be a vulnerable process. Such a process requires a 'holding space' within which educators can feel what it is like when their experiences at school – including difficult ones – get met with interest, attunement, and compassion. These must be spaces where generative social fields are cultivated and educators are supported to become more compassionate with themselves, and furthermore, to extend these qualities to students. The creation and anchoring of such 'holding spaces' for educators' relational learning process will be a milestone for successful implementation. These spaces may comprise various elements such as group practices, inter-personal dialogical practices fostering empathy and attunement among colleagues, as well as intra-personal practices supportive of self-compassion and mindfulness. Importantly, the quality with which such practices are introduced is crucial. This quality is shaped by the relationship between program providers and school professionals as well as by the training modules' atmosphere. The relational atmosphere needs to be imbued with the desired empathy, mindfulness, and attunement so that it invites relational trust. Therefore, program providers must embody and role-model what they teach in their relationship to the school professionals.

Additionally, sustainable implementation requires that these 'holding spaces' become routinized and integrated into organizational learning infrastructures supportive of educators' ongoing reflection and cultivation process alongside their everyday educational tasks (Senge 1990). This would go beyond the implementation of pre-defined program activities which could be termed as 'first-order' learning. When it comes to the complexities of interpersonal relationships within a fast-changing environment, first-order implementation may not be enough. Rather, a 'second-order' implementation may be necessary, comprising a continual learning process about how these ingredients (empathy being a central one) can be actualized. This learning process is fueled by the confrontation with changing demands and environmental challenges such as a new student who may 'trigger' previously unnoticed, challenging responsivities. Specifically, the unpredictability of interacting and relating with other human beings (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007) requires this continual learning process. Additionally, crises like the pandemic or an influx of traumatized refugee students from Ukraine – to name just a few – significantly change the context of enacting relational competence. Therefore, successful implementation should provide educators with a holding

space in which they can compassionately attune to how these challenges affect them and their relationships, thereby improving the quality of their response to these challenges. For example, it requires learning how to be empathic and helpful for traumatized students while not becoming co-traumatized. Additionally, a third-order implementation cycle could create mechanisms (and conversations) to improve the quality of these holding spaces providing insight and feedback about facilitating and hindering factors.

Examples for initial steps towards such learning infrastructures include, for instance, a regular mindfulness or self-compassion practice within the faculty. This faculty level mindfulness may support educators' relational awareness in their classroom enabling them to suspend destructive reaction tendencies and regulate affect within themselves and the class. The example of a school where educators and leaders developed their own phrase of 'placing the feet on the ground' illustrates how such a practice can be normalized and integrated in the daily routines and even language.

Furthermore, there were promising findings concerning guided dialogue practices fostering empathic listening among colleagues. Providing the infrastructure and guidance to help colleagues support each other more effectively and empathically (peer reflection) on a regular basis can serve as an important 'holding space' for educators' relational learning. Such dialogues may yield positive outcomes on various levels simultaneously, such as individual educators' self-awareness and their attunement with students, furthermore, improving relationship quality among colleagues, and serving a more compassionate faculty climate.

In fact, collegial reflection was part of the EMS program but could not be included in the data collection due to restrictions in the timeline of this thesis. Hence, as an outlook, future research will be able to better assess its long-term effects. Importantly, while collegial reflection can institutionalize 'relational learning', it cannot replace professional supervision needed for instance regarding traumatized students.

Implementation should also address the obstacles identified in this study and find ways of mitigating and overcoming them. It was found that educators' acceptance and adoption of the program hinged on an alignment between the intervention and the values enacted (not just espoused) by school leaders and faculty (Argyris and Schon 1992). The finding aligns with previous research (Banerjee et al. 2014). Moreover, it raises the question of how schools can be supported when leaders or faculty show consistent difficulties in enacting their espoused values or have become cynical and stuck in patterns of blaming. Here, a potential strategy may be to begin by building leaders' capacities first (Boell and Senge 2017; Sarafidou and Nikolaidis 2009). Empowering school leaders to embody attunement, self-accord, and clarity may support them to engage in long-term and complex cultural change processes. Furthermore, due to leader's function as role-models, it may prepare the ground for implementing whole-school programs more successfully later-on.

6.5.4. Compassionate Systems Change in Education

The most challenging obstacles of a successful implementation of the EMS program were reported to result from a perceived tension between program goals and the education system's structural constraints. For example, this tension manifested as time pressure and competing demands such as an obligation to teach a standardized curriculum to a class of about 28 students which seems to be at odds with attuning to each individual student. It appears that educators have adapted to these systemic conditions by developing a professional habitus impeding relationship quality with students. Therefore, programs aiming at more empathic, attuned, mindful relationships at school will be constrained by these conditions. Consequently, a long-term implication would be the creation of systemic conditions accounting for the massive body of knowledge about the importance of the teacher-student relationship (Hamre et al. 2013; Murray and Pianta 2007; Nordenbo et al. 2008; Pianta et al. 2012; Sabol and Pianta 2012) and educational goals like the OECD's 'transformation competences' (OECD 2019).

The necessary systemic adjustments that could be suggested here are abundant, ranging from relational competence as an integrated part of teacher training, training of early career teachers and school leaders, promoting a shifted view of teacher professionalism that includes 'personal-professional' development, to structural changes in parameters such as class size and paid working hours allocated to collegial reflection and supervision (currently approaching zero).

A comprehensive discussion of these adjustments is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, two promising findings should be highlighted because they may inspire the systemic change process. Firstly, generative social fields were crucially supported by noticing how one's own actions perpetuated undesired dynamics within the field. Often, when educators suspended their habitual images and reaction tendencies, the possibility of a new relationship could emerge. This very 'reperceiving' (Shapiro et al. 2006) may be a core ingredient for the success of all large scale and multi-level change initiatives (Scharmer 2009). For example, consider providing educators with regular collegial reflection and supervision as well as with repeated trainings in relational competence as integral part of their paid working hours – not as an extra-task added on top of everything else, but as a base for it. Structural shifts like this one may, in fact, require cultural change. The 'mental models' held within society about school (Ergas 2019; Senge 1990) may need to appreciate educators as relational beings. The job description of an educator may need to comprise the continual learning process within their relationships to the students – about themselves, their own patterns, habits, and needs, and about new ways of relating with each individual student. Consequently, many stakeholders in the system must turn their 'mental model of education' into an object of awareness, sense the associated bodily responsivities, suspend assumptions which otherwise reinforce the existing system, and allow themselves to be affected by a new possibility. Secondly, social fields demonstrate a tendency to 'spill over' from one system layer to another. Hence, as a support system for the social field between educator and student, all the surrounding fields can be infused with the desired relational qualities as well,

including fields among and between school leaders and educators, parents, community actors, school inspection, state-level administration, and government (Mahfouz et al. 2019). Therefore, cultivating this 'systems awareness' on all layers of the school system (Senge et al. 2019) may yield the possibility of re-shaping it so that students and educators can flourish and learn to contribute to the solutions for the big and pressing challenges of this century.

7. Conclusion: "A Necessary Earthquake"

When it comes to the relationships among students, educators, school leaders, and parents in the education system, there exists a significant gap between knowledge and action. Extensive research highlights the importance of the teacher-student relationship (García-Rodríguez et al. 2022; Roorda et al. 2017; Roorda et al. 2011; Spilt et al. 2011), yet practical efforts to support it are lacking. However, findings from the "Empathie macht Schule" project reveal that educators experienced transformative shifts in their social interactions during the program. These shifts encompassed a heightened relational awareness (Nielsen and Petersen 2021) of the embodied resonance with students, colleagues, and parents, fostering connected, collaborative, and integrative social fields. The findings suggest that targeted interventions like EMS can indeed set in motion processes that enhance the quality of relationships in educational settings.

These transformative shifts were contingent upon seeing educators' profound impact on the quality of the educational space, sensing their own and other's feelings, and transforming ineffective habitual reactions into empathic and compassionate actions.

While these findings hold promise, the study also identified significant obstacles. Factors such as heavy workloads, time constraints, and an exclusive focus on delivering curriculum content, deeply entrenched within the current education system, were identified as hindrances to these transformative shifts. Addressing these issues requires broader systemic changes beyond whole-school interventions like EMS. To truly foster generative social fields, transformative shifts must occur throughout the entire education system.

Initiatives with a wider scope, like the 'compassionate systems approach' developed by M.I.T. (Senge et al. 2019), primarily in the United States and Canada, provide prototypes for such systemic change. Interestingly, the micro-level findings from the EMS project may indeed be crucial for large systems change:

1. Systems Seeing: By recognizing and questioning deeply ingrained patterns, stakeholders within the education system can challenge and transcend outdated practices that perpetuate de-generative dynamics.
2. Systems Sensing: Embracing the needs, perspectives, and experiences of all stakeholders can improve collaboration and create the conditions for a greater sense of collective well-being.

3. Systems Transforming: Identifying moments when the system opens up for innovative approaches and perspectives affords transforming existing structures and practices.

By incorporating these micro-level findings into the broader context of large systems change, stakeholders can create a ripple effect throughout the education system. It requires a collective commitment to ongoing self-reflection, empathy, collaboration, and a willingness to challenge the status quo. In the words of a principal interviewed in the study, this calls for a *"necessary earthquake within the school system."* Embracing this seismic shift, stakeholders at various levels of the education system role model the transformational capacities needed to tackle complex problems, and thereby empower students to navigate and positively impact the interconnected challenges of our time.

Summary

The importance of the teacher-student relationship has been highlighted by a significant body of research. It impacts on student's social emotional and academic learning and well-being but also on teachers' well-being, stress, and job satisfaction. However, there is limited research on interventions that promote educators' capacity to build and maintain supportive relationships. This dissertation addresses this knowledge gap by exploring the perspectives of educators who participated in a longitudinal whole-school training program ('Empathie macht Schule', EMS) aimed at enhancing relational competence.

To better understand how educators cultivate and enact relational competences, the study adopts a social fields perspective, which allows for a nuanced exploration of relational competence within ongoing interactions. Social fields are shaped by their members and, in turn, shape their behaviors and interactions. Based on intercorporeality, which refers to the bodily resonance between actors, social fields present action possibilities or "affordances", inviting certain behaviors while discouraging others and leading to self-reinforcing patterns of interactions.

The study had three main objectives: (1.1) to reconstruct shifts in the social fields between educators and students as well as parents (micro-level) and (1.2) among school faculty (meso-level). Additionally, (2) the study aimed to identify factors that facilitate or hinder the implementation of the training program. Data was collected through interviews with school leaders (N = 7) before, during, and after the training program, and with educators (N = 7) after completing the training.

The EMS intervention was carried out in three urban elementary schools to enhance educators' relational competence and well-being. The training program included six three-day modules, covering topics such as handling difficult interactions with students, addressing grief and trauma, and fostering parental collaboration. Various tools and practices, including guided dialogue formats, meditations, and role plays, were used during the program.

Findings from the field shifts reported by educators (1.1) reveal changes from de-generative interaction cycles, for instance characterized by mutual blaming, towards generative ones that promote collaboration and well-being. These shifts were facilitated by educators' heightened relational awareness of their embodied resonance with students, colleagues, and parents. The thematic analysis identified subprocesses in educators' cultivation of relational competences, emphasizing the significance of recognizing and suspending habitual reactions, attuning to the emotions and needs of others and oneself, and communicating clearly without devaluing others. Thus, the study highlighted the significance of both inter- and intra-personal abilities in cultivating relational competence, including self-compassion, self-care, and relational awareness of the emotional responsivities that are evoked in relation to students.

Regarding longitudinal developments in the three schools' faculty climates (1.2), the findings show a complex picture with both positive shifts and persisting challenges in social fields. Moreover, the implementation process (2) was facilitated by the program's perceived alignment with schools' enacted values and by program practices that fostered supportive relationships among colleagues. However, the implementation process was hindered by systemic factors like heavy workload, particularly during to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While it is important to approach these findings with caution due to the limitations of the study, the results nonetheless suggest that targeted interventions can indeed support educators' relational competences. The social fields perspective provides a nuanced understanding of the intertwinement between intra-personal and inter-personal processes in cultivating relational competences. Notably, the findings highlighted the crucial contribution of intra-personal abilities, such as self-compassion, which might have been underestimated in some more recent conceptualizations of relational competence. Nurturing both intra-personal and inter-personal aspects of relational competence is crucial. Integrating self-compassion, self-care, and relational awareness into in-service educators' professional development can empower them to create more positive and supportive social fields.

Suggestions for future research are provided, emphasizing the need to consider multiple actors' perspectives in the reconstruction of social field shifts. In particular, further investigation of the identified subprocesses and contextual forces that influence their enactment is recommended.

The longitudinal developments in faculty climate provide valuable insights into the complexities of transforming social fields in educational settings. The presence of positive shifts and persistent challenges underscores the need to address systemic barriers to change. This is further supported by findings related to the implementation of the program into educators' daily work contexts.

To foster lasting change, programs fostering relational competence should be complemented by initiatives that address systemic challenges at a broader level. By creating systemic

conditions that are favorable for improved relationship quality throughout the education system, and simultaneously promoting educators' cultivation of their relational competences through targeted interventions, generative social fields can be created, benefitting all actors in the system.

Zusammenfassung

Die Qualität der Beziehung zu den Pädagog*innen spielt eine bedeutsame Rolle für das sozial-emotionale und akademische Lernen sowie das Wohlbefinden von Schüler*innen. Die Beziehungsqualität wirkt sich aber nicht nur auf die Schüler*innen aus, sondern auch auf das Wohlbefinden, den Stress und die Arbeitszufriedenheit der Pädagog*innen. Trotz der Bedeutung, die demnach der Beziehungsqualität an Schulen zukommt, ist bislang wenig darüber bekannt, wie Pädagog*innen darin unterstützt werden können, ihre Beziehungen zu Schüler*innen positiv zu gestalten. Daher untersucht diese Dissertation das Erleben von Pädagog*innen während eines schulweiten Trainingsprogramm zur Förderung ihrer Beziehungskompetenz ("Empathie macht Schule").

Für das Verständnis beziehungskompetenten Verhaltens von Pädagog*innen spielen Kontextfaktoren eine wichtige Rolle. Diese Studie trägt dem Rechnung, indem sie Beziehungskompetenz aus der Perspektive des sozialen Feldes in den Blick nimmt. Dies ermöglicht eine differenzierte Untersuchung im Kontext bestehender Interaktionsprozesse. Soziale Felder werden von ihren Mitgliedern geprägt und prägen diese im Gegenzug. Basierend auf der Interkorporealität, der körperlichen Resonanz zwischen Akteuren, ergeben sich in sozialen Feldern Handlungsmöglichkeiten oder "Affordanzen", die bestimmte Verhaltensweisen begünstigen oder verhindern, und somit selbsterhaltende Interaktionsmuster zwischen den Akteuren erzeugen.

Die Studie zielt darauf ab, Feld-Veränderungen während des "Empathie macht Schule" Programms (1.1) zwischen Pädagog*innen und Schülern sowie Eltern (Mikro-Ebene) und (1.2) im Kollegium (Meso-Ebene) zu rekonstruieren. Ein weiteres Ziel ist (2) die Identifikation von Faktoren, welche die Programmimplementierung unterstützen oder behindern. Die Daten wurden durch Interviews mit Schulleitern (N = 7) vor, während und nach dem Schulungsprogramm und mit Pädagogen (N = 7) nach Abschluss des Trainings erhoben.

Das Trainingsprogramm wurde in drei städtischen Grundschulen durchgeführt. Es umfasste sechs dreitägige Module zu Themen wie schwierigen Interaktionen mit Schülern, Trauer und Trauma sowie Zusammenarbeit mit Eltern. Hierbei kamen verschiedene Methoden wie geführte Dialogformate, Meditationen und Rollenspiele zum Einsatz, um die Beziehungskompetenzen und das Wohlbefinden der Pädagogen zu fördern.

Die von den Pädagogen berichteten Feld-Veränderungen (1.1) kennzeichnet die Transformation negativer Interaktionszyklen, etwa gegenseitiger Schuldzuweisungen, hin zu konstruktiven Mustern, die die Zusammenarbeit und das Wohlbefinden fördern. Diese Veränderungen wurden wesentlich durch das gesteigerte Gewahrsein der Pädagog*innen für ihre körperlich-emotionale Resonanz mit Schüler*innen, Kolleg*innen und Eltern ermöglicht. Die thematische Analyse identifizierte Teilschritte in der Entwicklung von Beziehungskompetenzen. Wichtige Komponenten waren das Erkennen und Unterbrechen eigener gewohnheitsmäßiger Reaktionen, Empathie für die Emotionen und Bedürfnisse anderer und für sich selbst, sowie eine nicht-abwertende Kommunikation. Die Studie hebt

somit die Bedeutung sowohl intra- als auch interpersonaler Fähigkeiten für die Entwicklung von Beziehungskompetenz hervor, einschließlich Selbstmitgefühl, Selbstfürsorge und des Bewusstseins für emotionale Reaktionsweisen im Umgang mit Schüler*innen.

In Bezug auf die longitudinale Entwicklung des Schulklimas (1.2) zeigten die Ergebnisse ein komplexes Bild mit sowohl positiven Verschiebungen als auch anhaltenden Herausforderungen in den sozialen Feldern. Förderlich für den Implementierungsprozess (2) waren die wahrgenommene Übereinstimmung des Programms mit den gelebten Werten der Schulen sowie der Umstand, dass die eingesetzten Methoden die Beziehungen zwischen Pädagog*innen verbesserten. Allerdings wurde die Implementierung durch systemische Faktoren wie hohe Arbeitsbelastung, insbesondere während der COVID-19-Pandemie, behindert.

Obwohl diese Befunde aufgrund der Beschränkungen dieser Studie mit Vorsicht betrachtet werden sollten, deuten sie dennoch darauf hin, dass gezielte Interventionen Pädagog*innen dabei unterstützen können, ihre Beziehungskompetenzen zu stärken und die Qualität der Beziehungen an Schulen zu verbessern. Die Kultivierung von Beziehungskompetenzen stellt sich dabei als ein differenziertes Zusammenspiel von intra- und interpersonalen Prozessen im sozialen Feld dar. Die wesentliche Bedeutung intra-personaler Fähigkeiten wie Selbstmitgefühl ist insofern ein wichtiger Befund, als dass diese in jüngeren Konzeptualisierungen von Beziehungskompetenz möglicherweise unterschätzt wurden. Die Anerkennung und Förderung sowohl intra- als auch interpersonaler Aspekte der Beziehungskompetenz ist von entscheidender Bedeutung. Indem Selbstmitgefühl, -fürsorge und ein Bewusstsein für Beziehungsprozesse in die berufliche Entwicklung von Pädagog*innen mit aufgenommen werden, können diese dazu befähigt werden, positive und unterstützende soziale Felder zu schaffen. Darüber hinaus betont die Studie, dass der Kultivierungsprozess eine kontinuierliche Unterstützung erfordert.

Zukünftige Forschung sollte den Ansatz des sozialen Feldes methodisch weiterentwickeln, beispielsweise indem Feld-Veränderungen aus der Sicht mehrerer Akteure und auf unterschiedlichen Systemebenen rekonstruiert werden. Darüber hinaus sollten die identifizierten Teilschritte der Beziehungskompetenzentwicklung weiter untersucht werden, vor allem im Hinblick auf unterstützende und hinderliche Kontextfaktoren.

Langfristige Verbesserungen der Beziehungsqualität an Schulen erfordern neben gezielten Programmen für Pädagog*innen auch eine Veränderung der Bedingungen auf systemischer Ebene. Durch das Zusammenwirken dieser Ansätze können generative soziale Felder geschaffen werden, die allen Akteuren im System zugutekommen.

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Eigenanteil an der Datenerhebung und -auswertung sowie eigene Veröffentlichungen

Diese Arbeit wurde durchgeführt im Rahmen der von Dr. Aguilar-Raab und Prof. Nielsen konzipierten ‚GEBE'-Studie ("Ein Ganzheitlicher Ansatz zur Entwicklung von Beziehungskompetenz & Empathie. Longitudinale Studie zur multimodalen Evaluation eines Empathie-Trainings in Grundschulen") am Institut für Medizinische Psychologie, Universitätsklinikum Heidelberg. Die ‚Empathie macht Schule'-Intervention wurde von Helle Jensen und Christine Ordnung sowie einem Team aus Co-Trainer*innen durchgeführt, wobei ich als Teil des Teams das Training einer (von insg. vier) Trainingsgruppen der ersten Kohorte mit ausgeführt habe.

Der qualitative Forschungsteil der GEBE-Studie besteht zu einem großen Teil aus dieser Arbeit. Für die Ausdifferenzierung der Forschungsfragen sowie des theoretischen Hintergrundes nahm ich eine Literaturrecherche vor und erarbeitete das Konzept sozialer Felder (siehe Publikation 2). Für die Datenerhebung entwickelte ich die Interviewleitfäden (unter Supervision durch Prof. Nielsen), rekrutierte die Proband*innen, und führte alle Interviews selbst durch. Ich erarbeitete das Vorgehen für die Datenauswertung der Field-Shift-Rekonstruktionen (4.5.2.). Die Datenanalyse führte ich größtenteils selbst durch. In einem zweiten Schritt diente meine initiale Analyse als Grundlage für die rekursive Themenüberarbeitung sowie intersubjektive Validierung, welche in Zusammenarbeit mit Prof. Nielsen geschah. Die thematische Karte (Figure 20) entstand in dem gemeinsamen Auswertungsprozess. Die gesamte Dissertationsschrift verfasste ich vollständig in Eigenleistung.

Teilergebnisse der vorliegenden Arbeit wurden in folgenden Artikeln vorab publiziert bzw. befinden sich im Publikationsprozess oder in Vorbereitung:

1) **Herrmann, L.,** Nielsen, B. L., & Aguilar-Raab, C. (2021, June). The impact of COVID-19 on interpersonal aspects in elementary school. In *Frontiers in education* (Vol. 6, 635180). Frontiers Media SA.
2) Pomeroy, E.*, & **Herrmann, L.*** (2023). Social Fields: Knowing the water we swim in. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 00218863231174957.
   * geteilte Erstautorenschaft
3) **Herrmann, L.** A Deep Dive Into Social Field Shifts: Examining field autonomy and malleability during an awareness-based change program. *Journal of Awareness-Based Systems Change.* Manuskript zur Publikation angenommen.
4) **Herrmann, L.,** & Nielsen, B.L. Teacher Perspectives on Relational Competence. Manuskript zur Publikation eingereicht.
5) **Herrmann, L.,** Nielsen, B.L., Garvert, H., & Aguilar-Raab, C. Cultivating teachers' relational competence improves relationship quality with students and parents. A qualitative study of social field shifts during a whole-school approach. Manuskript in Vorbereitung.

Publikation 1 basiert in Teilen auf den Ergebnissen zur COVID-19 Pandemie als hinderlicher Faktor bei der Implementierung (Kapitel 5.5.2, Faktor F). Mein Eigenanteil an der Publikation erstreckt sich auf die Datenerhebung, -auswertung und das Schreiben des Manuskriptentwurfs.

Publikation 2 wurde in geteilter Erstautorenschaft mit Eva Pomeroy veröffentlicht. Dr. Pomeroy und ich haben in einem dialogischen Prozess, der über ein Jahr währte, ein Konzept sozialer Felder erarbeitet, welches die theoretische Grundlage dieser Arbeit (Kapitel 3) darstellt. Hier sei auf die Begrenztheit des Konzepts "Eigenanteil" hingewiesen, wenn neue Einsichten dialogisch gewonnen werden (was nicht erst seit Sokrates üblich ist). Dennoch lassen sich einige genuine Beiträge ausmachen, die ich zu dieser Publikation beigesteuert habe. Dazu zählen unter anderem die phänomenologischen und intersubjektiven Konzepte Affordance, Interkorporealität und Autonomie (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007; Fuchs 2016b), die den Kern unseres Feld-Konzeptes ausmachen sowie Beiträge aus der Familientherapie (Tomm et al. 2014). Des Weiteren habe ich das Manuskript gesamtheitlich mitverfasst und mehrfach überarbeitet, mein Eigenanteil ist daher als 50% zu bewerten.

Publikation 3 basiert auf den berichteten Veränderungen im Schulklima (Kapitel 5.4.) und stellt eine vollständige Eigenleistung dar.

Publikation 4 basiert auf den Ergebnissen der qualitativen thematischen Analyse (Kapitel 5.3.) und deren Diskussion (6.3.1.). Der Manuskriptentwurf wurde gesamtheitlich von mir verfasst (Einleitung, Methoden, Ergebnisse und Diskussion) und gemeinsam mit Prof. Nielsen überarbeitet. Mein Eigenanteil liegt bei 80%.

Publikation 5 basiert auf den Rekonstruktionen sozialer Feldveränderungen – sowohl im Hinblick auf das methodische Vorgehen (Kapitel 4.5.2.) und Ergebnisse dieser Arbeit (5.2.). Den ersten Manuskriptentwurfe habe ich vollständig verfasst. Er wurde gemeinsam mit den Ko-Autoren überarbeitet und befindet sich in Bearbeitung.

Ich möchte darauf hinweisen, dass sich bei 3 – 5 noch nicht um Veröffentlichungen handelt. Daher war es nicht möglich, diese in dieser Arbeit zu zitieren (was auch auf eigene Abbildungen zutrifft, die sowohl in dieser Arbeit als auch den Publikationen dargestellt werden).

Zudem wurden auf folgenden Konferenzen Teilstudienergebnisse präsentiert:

Herrmann, L., Garvert, H., Nielsen, B.L., & Aguilar-Raab (2023). Improvement in Relational Competencies and Relationship Quality Following Empathy Training for the School Staff: A Mixed-Method Approach. Presented at European Conference on Educational Research, 22 – 25 Aug 2023.

Chin, T., Cook, L., Drake, J., **Herrmann, L.,** (2023). Panel discussion on evaluation of systems awareness and compassionate systems change. Presented at M.I.T. Systems Awareness Research Conference, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, USA, 17 – 19 January 2023

Herrmann, L. & Aguilar-Raab, C. (2022). Cultivating Generative Social Fields in a Whole-School Approach: Educators' Empathy and Relational Competencies and School Students' Wellbeing. Presented virtually at European Conference on Educational Research, 23 – 26 Aug 2022

Aguilar-Raab, C., & **Herrmann, L.** (2022). Moments of change during a whole school intervention focused on empathy and relationships. Presented virtually at Relation-Centered Education Network Conference, 11 – 13 June 2022

Jensen, H. & **Herrmann, L.** (2021). Empathie macht Schule. Beziehungskompetenz für Lehrkräfte. presented virtually at the Bundeskongress Schulpsychologie, 23 Sep 2021

Appendix

A. Field Shift – Reconstructions

Micro-Level

Example A: From disciplining the other to expressing oneself

PAST	NEW
SETTING	
Setting: Boy seated in back of classroom, during class. Boy characterized as talkative, lively, noisy. Normal sized class setting	
PHASE 1: ENTERING CLASSROOM	
"with full head." Having a fixed image of the boy, not really being aware of him. Anticipating that the boy will be a disturbance. *"I really had such a fixed image in my head. This is the boy. Every day. And this is the way I will experience him again today. But I had not really observed him properly. What he does."* *"It has pushed itself between us. My anticipation."* Feeling pressured by the pedagogical task of having to change boy's behavior	Practicing micro-mindfulness: Releasing stress, anticipation before entering the class. *"Breathing out / let everything sink in, briefly. And leave behind what happened in the break or earlier. And I enter class so-to-say neutrally."* *"I can face it in a more relaxed way"*
PHASE 2: WHILE LESSON UNFOLDS	
Perceiving boys behavior: Talking with other students and shouting ("reinrufen"), hearing his "*penetrating voice*", mumbling; Worrying that he is distracting other students and perceiving that others turn to him, being vigilant for disturbances ("Having ears on the back"). Attributing a negative intentionality to the boy which is personally targeted at her: "Er will sich nicht ändern lassen, von mir, so. Oder ähm/ meine Regeln, die ich hier aufstelle, die sind ihm egal." "Es persönlich nehmen" Perceiving slow build up of tension: (Tröpfchenweise) Trying to direct students' attention back to lesson: "Ich sage, jetzt, das ist wichtig …" Feeling repeatedly forced to interrupt own intended actions Feeling anger rise from the belly Focusing attention on "the disturbance" / "reacting to the disturbance"	Noticing that habitual strategy does not work. Being more at ease, tolerating the boy's restlessness for a longer time. Being less vigilant. Perceiving tension building up. *"It is building up inside me… drop by drop"* Suspending attribution of negative intentionality. *"I don't take it personal any longer."* *"He has not changed but my view on him as changed"* *"For a while I can tolerate it, because I know: that's the way the boy is. I cannot change him. I try to stay with myself and to see: How long can I stand it now? At some point I tell him: You, soon we will reach the point. Soon it will be too much for me. Then, it's disturbing me too much what you are doing."*

HER REACTION: Disciplining the boy: 'Stop it now!' Thinking: *"I have to influence the child in such a way that it changes."* Focusing on the disturbance. Intending to stop the disturbance and influence the child in such a way that he does not do it anymore. Changing his behavior seen as her pedagogical task. *"I uttered my typical phrase or disciplined him. Just whatever came up in the situation. But I did not perceive him accurately. Yes. That is indeed different now."*	Giving boy heads-up: *"For a while I can endure this. But at one point we reach the point that it is too much for me. And it disturbs me. And you have to understand that it's too much for me."* *"Before I talked with [project lead during EMS module] I told him 'stop it now!' But it does not help. Meanwhile, I … don't focus on him, but I say: 'It is disturbing me. Now I am disturbed. Can you stop it now?'"* Taking responsibility for her own state of being annoyed and distracted. Showing her own boundary: telling the boy in the moment, when it is too much for her (without taking his behavior personal): *"And sometimes the moment comes and then I tell him: 'Now it's totally disturbing me. Now you have to stop it.'"*
HIS PERCEIVED REACTION: No awareness of the boy's reaction. Focus was on the "disturbance" *"I was too busy with the situation. I reacted too much to the disturbance. And did not pay attention to the relationship. … I did not really see him."*	Perceiving the boy's response: pausing, slightly startled, trying to restrain himself more. Attribution to the boy the intention to cooperate, taking her serious. *"He looks at me with a serious gaze. As if he is pausing for a moment. 'Oh was I too loud?'" … Slightly startled, not because he is afraid, but because he notices: 'Oh, now it was too much. Now I have to restrain myself.'"* *"I notice then that he tries to restrain himself. I do notice that he takes me seriously. It's not the case that he has the feeling of 'I do not care what she is telling be', but I can sense that he indeed also tries to consider this [what I told him]. To some degree, within his capacities."*
RELATIONAL QUALITY Relational quality: *"dragging in opposite directions and no one is really happy with it"* *"A different quality. Earlier, my feeling was that … it [the relationship] is a rigid band. And we are each dragging in opposite directions, and no one is happy with it. And now my feeling is rather that it's flexible. And we approach each other but are also able to be more distant to some degree. But, there stays a tension, but a good one. No one feels dragged now. That's how I feel it."*	*"flexibly approaching and distancing"*
CONSTRUING OWN ROLE: Pedagogical task to change boy's behavior. Feeling of pressure. If boy's behavior does not change, it means she fails as an educator.	Intention to create a relationship with the child in order to reach the child. This way, change emerges in the child. Balancing acceptance and pedagogy. Flexibility of bracketing pedagogical tasks in order to cultivate relationship. Feeling of relief and greater relaxation. *Also und jetzt habe ich aber gelernt, einen anderen Blick darauf zu haben. Dass es nichts dafür kann – er ist eben so wie er ist. Klar muss er auch lernen, dass es Grenzen gibt und Regeln gibt. Das heißt nicht, dass er keine Regeln einhalten darf, aber ich kann sie (…) entspannter bei ihm anwenden (lacht). Das hört sich jetzt doof an, aber es entspannt mich/ Tatsache/ ein Stück weit. Ich bin ähm/ ähm/ ja, weil ich einfach nicht/ nicht das Gefühl habe, versagt zu haben, äh/ ihn zu erziehen. Also ihn zu verändern.* *S1: Sondern ähm/ ähm/ ja eben auf die/ meine Beziehung zu dem Kind zu gucken, dass ich versuche die zu/ zu stabilisieren, sodass ich über die Beziehung dieses Kind besser erreichen kann. Und dadurch bei ihm dann, von sich aus, eine Veränderung erscheint, oder eintritt.*

Example B: Taking responsibility instead of leaving it up to the child

HABITUAL	SHIFT
Setting: Vertretungsstunde, class with children who the educator experiences as challenging. Shortly after EMS module. During COVID. While teacher hands out papers, a boy begins to move through the classroom.	
BEFORE LESSON	
Anticipating challenging behavior and difficulties of getting in contact with the child. "und innerlich denke ich schon und verleiere die Augen: Oh Gott schon wieder das." "ich habe immer gemerkt, dass ich auch nicht mit diesem Kind in Kontakt komme. Das war mir immer klar. Das ist wirklich[…] ein Typus Kind, wo ich merke: Mh hm (genervt). Da gelingt es mir einfach nicht […] Kontakt herzustellen."	Intention to use EMS (personal language) "Und ich dachte heute mache ich es mal wirklich ganz anders." "Okay, jetzt kommt die Situation, wo sich Modul vier beweisen kann, ne? //Jetzt probiere ich es aus/ "(2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 69)
DURING LESSON	
IMPRESSION OF THE BOY: A boy moves around in the classroom, while the rest of the class is ready to work, and the rule was to stay at his place. Portraying boy's mental state as *"self-forgetting"* ("break-feeling"), attributing no negative intentionality (*"he does not have bad intentions"*)	
INNER PROCESS: Feeling tension rising, as the anxiously anticipated confrontation begins *und in mir steigt schon wieder der Alarmpegel äh/ innerlich: Oh nein, jetzt geht das wieder los. Diese all zu bekannte Konfrontation zwischen uns ähm/* (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 58)	Feeling excited instead of stressed. Also ich war nicht gestresst wie sonst. Sonst bin ich ja in dieser Situation schon innerlich mehr gestresst. Also Atmung und ich merke ja den Halspuls. Also äh/ und innerlich denke ich schon und verleiere die Augen: Oh Gott schon wieder das. In dem Fall war es die Aufregung. Okay, jetzt kommt die Situation, wo sich Modul vier beweisen kann, ne? //Jetzt probiere ich es aus/
	Taking more time, slowing down before acting (*"a pause between what is happening there and then, what I do"*): Not reacting immediately to the boy's walking, but letting him continue. While continuing to hand out papers to the class, calming down her own arousal (e.g., by assessing that no one is actually at risk through the boy's behavior). Breathing, collecting herself, preparing inwardly to do it differently, saying to herself: *"There is enough time for this. I go to him later (after handing out the papers). That will be enough. And I will do it differently."* "Weil ich so gedacht habe: Ach. Das hat ja alles seine Zeit. Ich gehe dann hin. Das reicht dann auch immer noch, ne? Und ich mache es ja gleich anders (lacht)." Intending to "own" her need, take responsibility for it, and express what she needs from the boy now, instead of leaving it up to him or making him responsible. *dass ich gedacht habe: Okay, das ist bei mir. Ich lasse es bei mir. Aber ich mache es ganz klar, was ich jetzt hier brauche, ne?* (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 50)
EXPRESSION TO THE BOY: Reacting quickly, habitual response characterized as fast. (usually 30 seconds, now: taking minutes) "reacting" "im Affekt" Asking the boy what he needs to calm down. *meine ein ursprünglicher Spruch/ oder meine/ aus meiner Trickkiste war ähm/ was brauchst du jetzt, um zur Ruhe zu kommen, ne? Es muss jetzt hier ruhig werden. Was brauchst du jetzt? Hilft das? Hilft das? Oder das? Und es hat/ damit hatte ich nie Erfolg* *"What do you need to be able to work now?"* or: walking to him, and accompanying ("pushing") him to his place/seat: *schnell einmal dahin und "Mensch und komm. Setz dich mal hin."* (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 95) habitual reaction involves making child responsible to change the situation, as if saying *"change something!"* ich habe es ja bei mir, deswegen/ das war ja sonst immer dieses/ dass	Addressing the boy with a request, with little or no emotional reactivity: Saying his name. *"You have noticed that I try to calm things down here. I can't do it like this. I simply need you to be calm." "Go to your place."* So, du merkst ja/ ich versuche hier gerade Ruhe reinzukriegen. Ich kann das/ ich kann das so nicht. Ich brauche von dir jetzt einfach Ruhe. Und dann guckt mich das Kind und meint: Aha! Und es setzt sich hin und ist ruhig. Ich dachte: Okay. (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 48) Ja, es ist für mich versachlicht. Für mich, ne? Nicht dieses ähm/ das klingt jetzt komisch, aber sonst ist man ja so im/ im Affekt und in einer/ zu stark in diesen/ (…) reagieren, reagieren, reagieren. (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 79)

ich es zu ihm gegeben habe. Dieses/ (klatscht) ändere mal etwas! (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 109) Being caught in own reactivity. sonst ist man ja so im/ im Affekt und in einer/ zu stark in diesen/ (…) reagieren, reagieren, reagieren. (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 79)	
IMPRESSION OF BOY'S REACTION	Boy responds saying "Aha, OK" and sits down. Und dann guckt mich das Kind und meint: Aha! Und es setzt sich hin und ist ruhig. (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 48) Und damit/ das war wirklich/ das war einfach/ das hat das Kind einfach angenommen. (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 50) es war ja jetzt eher eine Bitte an ihn. Weil/ weil ich sonst so nicht kann, ne? (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 113)
RESONANCE WITH BOY'S REACTION	In noticing that the boy accepts and goes along with what she told him, relaxation, joy, and surprise arise *("bubbly sense of bliss.")* *("INCREDIBLE!")*. *"deep relaxation"* Und danach war es wie ein Segen. Das war wirklich/ ah Blumenwiese. (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 71)
FRAMING	Personal language Taking responsibility vs. Dieses "Was brauchst du?." Damit denken wir gut pädagogisch zu sein, ne? (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 48) Wir waren echt schockiert in diesem Modul, dass wir auf einmal diese Fragen nicht mehr stellen durften. Also nicht mehr stellen sollten, weil es dem Kind zu viel Verantwortung gibt. Und genau das war dann, ne?/ das war dann bei uns auch richtig so wie mit einer heißen Nadel ins Hirn eingebrannt worden – aus unser aller Sicht. Und wir gedacht haben: Um Gottes Willen, wir machen das seit Jahren FALSCH. Ähm/ und der gegenteilige Effekt war, dass ich gedacht habe: Okay, das ist bei mir. Ich lasse es bei mir. Aber ich mache es ganz klar, was ich jetzt hier brauche, ne? Und damit/ das war wirklich/ das war einfach/ das hat das Kind einfach angenommen. (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 50)

Example C: From criticizing behavior to acknowledging motivation

HABITUAL	SHIFT
SETTING: Normal class setting. Child comments relentlessly on many occasions. "Kevin always has something to say. When a child makes a mistake. When he submits something late. When there's something on the board, and so on."	
HER REACTION: And then my reaction is: "Kevin, um/ that's enough, um/ he'll handle it soon." Or you always say: "Kevin, um/ somehow/ well, you always say/ you always give him the hint: What you're doing right now is not right. Um/ please step back and let the child handle it." So um/ you're protecting the other child because Kevin is interfering where he shouldn't interfere." (Maria, Pos. 18-19) S1: No, um/ well I think that was the facial expression. Sometimes like, oh, what's happening now? But he does say it already. And then you react immediately and say: Kevin, come on, we still have time for that. And Kevin, we could do that later, now you've taken away our time again, or something like that. For example. L: So, in that first moment, it's like, "Oh, Kevin." S1: Yes. Right? Exactly. L: And then, when this "Oh, Kevin" happens. Is there also a bodily sensation for you, or is it just this "Oh, Kevin"? S1: Well, actually um/ well actually: Ah, now we won't accomplish anything again if there's another disruption inside. But otherwise, actually/ Feeling time pressure	S1: Well, not really. I've already noticed that, especially in the recent seminars we had. It became clear to me, strangely enough. Whatever the reason may be. L: So/ it became clear to you that he's just like that and/ S1: Well, no/ it's just that I noticed how I talk to him when he displays that behavior. I realized that what I say is really unfavorable. Because he hears every morning or every day: Kevin, what you're doing right now is really disruptive. And when you hear that every day, that what you're doing is not wanted here at all, it's not nice. And then I thought, because it really happens rarely with the others, well, let's stick with Kevin, yes. (Maria, Pos. 114-116) Owning her issue with time pressure, instead of making the child wrong S1: Yes, because I feel sorry for him, yes. So, when he hears it and then I think, no um/ no Kevin, that's not your problem, it's my problem. Because I'm just thinking, you're absolutely right, but um/ I just have a problem with time and um/ that's not your problem (laughs). (Maria, Pos. 206)

L: We won't accomplish anything again? S1: Well/ we/ we/ well/ because time is always running out on me. And if we now/ well, I just have time in mind, you know? L: Ah, okay. Okay. So just the time for the lesson, for what you want to do. S1: Exactly. Always, exactly. That's actually my handicap. L: And then the disruption comes, and then this feeling is like, ah, now I can't manage it because I don't have time for that. S1: Exactly. Exactly. Exactly. Exactly. Right. So/ L: And then you think/ do you already think/ so do you already think, oh yeah, now he's doing it again/ now we have to deal with this again// for the next/ S1: Exactly, now we see what he wants and um// and then/ well, I see what he wants and then I say: Come on, Kevin, we can do that later um/ it doesn't have to be now, right? Or then do it quickly now and um/ but you could have said that later too. Or something like that. So, it depends on the situation. And if there's time, I think, for example, during the pre-Christmas period, it's not that important to me and I don't plan that much. And then it goes as it goes. Because um/ the Advent calendar needs to be done. The coziness needs to happen, and if there's a disruption, then it doesn't bother me at all/ I'm deeply relaxed about it. I still say it though because that's just how it is. But I could also remind myself in my head that Kevin is like that and always has the right response ready. (Maria, Pos. 98-110) Not a feeling of being in contact So in that moment, there is no contact. Each person goes their own way. He goes back to his seat and stops or doesn't do it. And I continue with what I wanted to do. So, I don't think you can consider it as contact in that moment. (Maria, Pos. 156)	

Example D: From task-orientation to supporting emotion regulation

HABITUAL	SHIFT
SETTING	
After EMS module 1. Special ed. class of seven children. Children writing; Task to write three sentences about their weekend; Calm atmosphere, One boy in the class – with a difficult family background – is restless;	
Beginning impressions and expressions	
After writing a sentence, the boy crosses it out again. At one point he begins to crunch the paper. Perceiving boy as increasingly desperate. Walking to him and kneeling next to him. Resonating with his desperation is "difficult to bear", intending to help him out of the desperation. (empathic distress) Ich habe halt diese zunehmende Verzweiflung wahrgenommen, die er einfach hatte. (2021_10_28_Franziska, Pos. 49) Satellite: Relation to boy: Knowing his family background and "that he has a hard time"	
EDUCATOR'S INNER PROCESS:	
Being fast, treating him "like the others" Habitual behaviors: Und sonst hätte ich einfach gesagt/ Hätte ich mich gar nicht getraut, ihn so rauszunehmen, wie ich ihn dann rausgenommen habe. Maintaining her own tempo, rhythm, task-orientation, and staying within the perceived spatial and temporal confinement: no extra time for individual attunement to the boy's underlying need for rest or relief. Following her immediate impulse to take the pressure off the boy.	Beginning to infer that *"there must be a reason behind"* why he is not able to do his task. Noticing that her usual ways of handling this are insufficient Noticing that this situation provides the opportunity to apply EMS. *Das war eine Situation, wo ich gemerkt habe, dass das, was wir dort durchgesprochen haben, dass ich das anwenden kann.* (2021_10_28_Franziska, Pos. 51) Suspending her fast-paced task-orientation, and adopting an "allowing" attitude toward herself and the boy. Taking time to attune to the boy. Und dann noch mal ihm und mir zu erlauben, die Zeit zu geben, da nachzuspüren. (2021_10_28_Franziska, Pos. 60) Also für mich zu spüren, es ist zu schnell und mir diesen Stopp zu erlauben und damit mit dem Kind in Kontakt zu gehen. (2021_10_28_Franziska, Pos.

	72)
	Feeling courage, empowered to leave the habitual ways of operating and *"do something differently."*
	Deliberately guiding herself to find a new way of helping the boy and using her learnings from EMS: *"We have spoken about this [in the EMS module]. Now take a look, where you can go."* *So, also es war einfach so/ Ich habe/ wir haben doch das gehabt, wir haben doch Sachen durchgesprochen. Jetzt guck doch mal, wo du hingehen kannst. So dahinten [zeigt mit beiden Händen hinter ihren Kopf] war EmS und da [zeigt vor sich] war das Kind. Und was mache ich denn jetzt damit? Wie kriege ich denn das zusammen? Wie kann ich dann die Chance, die ich habe, wie kann ich das denn nutzen?*
EXPRESSION TO THE BOY:	
Providing relief to the boy by taking the task from him, telling the boy: *"OK. You don't have to write anything today."* "sonst hätte ich das so gemacht, dass ich gesagt hätte: Okay. Dann schreibst du halt heute nichts, und ihn dadurch zu entlasten." (2021_10_28_Franziska, Pos. 63) "You have to stay inside the space. The setting is already so individualized" Adhering to the assumption that the special-ed class setting is per se *"sufficiently individualized"* for children's needs.	Shifting and calming down her rhythm, pace, and quality of attending to and talking to the boy: *"more calm, more slowly"*: *"feeling her way"*, with a *"sensitive"* quality of being open and receptive for his immediate response. *"Also, es war so irgendwie wie so ein Tasten letztendlich"* *Und dann war das so ein Tasten. Was könnte es denn sein? Ja, und ich bin sonst sehr, du merkst es ja, ich bin sehr/ ich bin schnell. Ich bin impulsiv. … Also langsamer, ruhiger. Und dann halt ich dieses so ein bisschen Vortasten.* First, approaching him by asking: *"Is it that you can't do it now?"* Getting no answer from him. Understanding (perspective-taking) that he is not able to give an answer. *Ich glaube, ich habe ihn dann gefragt: Kannst du grad nicht? Und dann konnte er mir nicht antworten. Das war ihm ja nicht möglich. Er konnte doch nicht mit mir kommunizieren.* Breaking out of imagined limitation of being confined to the classroom, focusing on the possibilities, creativity response within the given conditions: Idea arises of giving the boy a break outside the classroom: *"AAH, ich kann es ja mal SO probieren."* *Und dann dachte ich: Guck, was du für Möglichkeiten hast. Und dann eröffnete sich/ hab ich gesagt: Okay, es muss ja nicht hier sein. Warum? Also ich glaube, in dem Augenblick war dieses: Ich kann andere Sachen tun, von EmS hier hinten zu dem Kind nach vorne war einfach: Tu es doch mal anders. Ich glaube, DAS war der Moment. Zu sagen, ich geh raus mit ihm. Es hätte auch was anderes sein können, aber ich glaube, dass das mit dem: Hier hinten ist EmS und da vorne ist das Kind, war einfach wirklich: Tu es anders als du es sonst tust. (2021_10_28_Franziska, Pos. 58)* *Aber da war ich schon so weit zu sagen: Okay, ich nehm ihm nicht die Aufgabe weg, sondern ich nehme ihn aus der Situation heraus und gebe ihm diese Pause. (2021_10_28_Franziska, Pos. 69)* Second trial of speaking with him, expressing her observation providing words for his experience, and by offering him with a strategy for regulating himself: *"Look, I notice you can't do this. Right?"* And he replied *"hm."* *"Do you need a break?"* *"hmm."* Handing a visual timer to the boy, telling him: *"When the time is off, and you feel good again, then you come back in."* *Pass auf, ich merke grad, du kannst grad nicht. Stimmt es? Und er meinte er so: "Hm." Ich so: Brauchst du mal ne Pause? "Hmm." Also er hat auch gar nicht wirklich/ nur so formuliert und dann habe ich ihm diese Uhr gegeben und dann hat er/ hat er sich draußen hingesetzt und ich hab gesagt: Guck mal und wenn die Uhr durchgelaufen ist, - Das sind so ne Farben, die in so Blasen runterlaufen. - Und du dich dann gut fühlst, dann kommst du wieder rein. (2021_10_28_Franziska, Pos. 22)* Daring to reframe the situation, allow herself to break the pattern of staying inside the room; Reframing it in terms of his needs, centering his need, instead of the task
	Noticing that her idea was benefitting him, feeling of warmth and closeness arises.
AFTERWARDS/RELATIONAL FIELD: n. spec.	In her: Success, relaxation ("stimmig", "aufgegangen") Between them: warmth, "orange light", closer together

	In the following, the boy was able to signal to her when he was not able to do a task. (Compared to other lessons with other teachers, in which he signals it by sitting under the table)

Example E: From insisting on rules to showing personal care

PAST	NEW
Setting: Boy with difficult family situation, at-risk, in her class, can't fulfil standards that others fulfil. Difficult family background: S1: Ähm/ also äh/ bei äh/ einem Schüler, der in sehr, sehr prekären Verhältnissen lebt, ähm/ (…) da äh/ bin ich sozusagen ähm/ habe ich jetzt eine ganz große Zurückhaltung. Nicht seiner Person gegenüber. Gar nicht. Sondern die Verhältnisse sind so schwierig, dass ich weiß, er kann nicht immer pünktlich kommen. Er kann überhaupt nicht immer zur Schule kommen, weil seine Mama irgendetwas von ihm braucht. Ähm/ er kann Papiere nicht bringen. Er kann keine Hausaufgaben machen. Alles Mögliche. Also, er lebt wirklich in extrem prekären ähm/ na, in einer extrem prekären Situation. Ja (…). (Jill, Pos. 44) School is safest place for him. sie akzeptieren das und der Junge, ich glaube/ also, die Schule ist wirklich der sicherste Ort, den er hat. Da wo/ wo Verlässlichkeit ist ähm/ und äh/ es ist eigentlich unglaublich. Die/ trotz dieser prekären Situation, obwohl er sprachlich ganz große Schwierigkeiten hat. Ist er, wenn er das ist, ist er so präsent am Lernen – das ist die reinste Freude. (Jill, Pos. 46) Boy fights with other children outside classroom, "shuts down" and defends himself strongly S1: Dieses Gesicht, was er draußen teilweise zeigt, wo er sich irgendwie wehren muss. Oder sich rechtfertigen muss, oder irgendwie so etwas. Da kann er auch ganz andere/ die sehe ich im Klassenraum extrem selten, extrem selten. L: Und was/ was meinst du? Dann ist er/ wie ist er dann? Dann draußen? S1: Äh/ er kann sich komplett verschließen und kann sagen: Nein, Ende Gelände, ich mache nichts mehr. Und ähm/ er ist schon auch mit allen Wassern gewaschen, ne? Also, von/ von Prügeln und ähm/ bestimmten schönen Wörtern. Das kann er aus dem Vollen schöpfen. Und äh/ hält sich da ähm/ an keine Regeln. Ähm/ und dieses Verhalten zeigt er im Klassenraum, in der Lerngruppe, so gut wie gar nicht. (Jill, Pos. 51-54) Situation: Boy does not fulfill his school duties.	
Insisting on rules. "Mich festbeißen" Getting angry when they are not met. S1: Ja, also wirklich zu sagen/ erstens ich rege mich nicht mehr darüber auf, weißt du? Menacing with punishment	Letting go, not insisting on rules: also, dieses Loslassen. Einfach zu sagen: Okay, I can't change it (lacht). Ich gucke ähm/ was/ 21:42 L: Das ist das Neue, ne? Oder da/ da sagst du, da hast du etwas Anderes ausprobiert. S1: Ja, also wirklich zu sagen/ erstens ich rege mich nicht mehr darüber auf, weißt du? Es ist wie es ist, ich kann es nicht ändern. Ähm/ und ich gucke, was sich sozusagen äh/ (…) aus einem anderen Kontext. Ich kann ihm am Lernen und beim in der Gruppe sein – da kann ich ihn sozusagen kriegen. Und da habe ich sozu/ da habe ich ihn. Nur er ist/ er lernt super gut. Er kann sich fokussieren (Jill, Pos. 46-49) Striking new balance between rules and relationship (fathoming)
Ähm/ weil ich jetzt nicht irgendwie drohe, auf irgendetwas beharre und äh/ weil, das fängt bei der Telefonnummer der Mutter an, die ich nicht kriege und (räuspert sich). (Jill, Pos. 44)	Seeing that it's not his fault. Realistic picture of his situation. "Und ich habe mich sozusagen insofern zurückgenommen/ also, dass ich gesagt habe: Okay, I can't change it, so (lacht) I love it. Ähm/ und das ist/ dadurch wird die prekäre Situation nicht anders. Ähm/ aber ich glaube es ist ähm/ immer noch das Beste, was ich erreichen kann (lacht). Ähm/ weil ich jetzt nicht irgendwie drohe, auf irgendetwas beharre und äh/ weil, das fängt bei der Telefonnummer der Mutter an, die ich nicht kriege und (räuspert) wofür er aber eigentlich auch nichts kann. Ähm/ und er kann für ganz vieles wirklich nichts. Und das ist äh/ auch völlig klar. Äh/ und das ist ähm/ letztendlich total schön. Weil die anderen Kinder das akzeptieren, in der Tat." (Jill, Pos. 44) L: Was mich sozusagen interessiert, war: Wie ist dieser Veränderungsmoment zustande gekommen? Also wie ist das zustande gekommen? Also, dieses "Ah, jetzt akzeptiere ich ihn"? Oder, jetzt/ jetzt "I can't change it", wie du sagst. S1: Äh/ ja. Also äh/ auch im Sinne von ähm/ "ich akzeptiere jetzt." "Ich akzeptiere jetzt, dass ich nicht alles kriegen kann, was ich eigentlich qua Lehrerin kriegen können müsste, oder so etwas. Ähm/

	L: Was wäre das, was du kriegen können müsstest? S1: Naja, es gibt bestimmte Schulpflichten. Und die kriege ich einfach nicht. Er hat keine vollständigen Materialien, da kommt keine Entschuldigung. Er ist, ne? Wenn seine Mutter gerade ihn braucht, zum Übersetzen irgendwo im Amt, dann kommt er da nicht zur Schule! L: Mh hm. Okay. Also, das/ das kannst du/ diese Dinge kriegst du nicht, sagst du. Als/ als Lehrerin/ S1: Genau, die kriege ich nicht und da könnte ich mich jetzt daran festbeißen. Und die lasse ich einfach los. Die lasse ich einfach los und äh/ und desto mehr ich loslasse, desto lieber kommt er in die Schule. Der kommt echt gerne in die Schule. As a result: He learns at school Und äh/ und ich bin manchmal so verblüfft, wie die äh/ gut/ ich meine, der ist jetzt/ der hinkt hinterher. Das ist so unstrittig. Äh/ aber wie gut er trotz dieser prekären Umstände/ wie gut er eigentlich lernen kann.
No comparable example given.	Boy sent to support class. He shuts down, is angry at teacher and does not participate in class. S1: Mh hm. Ähm/ (…) (…) also, es ist so: Er kommt zu spät, weil er nämlich vom Erzieher hochgeschickt worden ist. Ähm/ was ich in dem Moment gar nicht wusste. Äh/ und zu dem Zeitpunkt hatte ich schon mit zwei anderen Kindern angefangen. Und wollte natürlich, dass er auch mit einsteigt. Und er hat es aber nicht gemacht. Und ich habe dann auch nicht/ ich habe nicht insistiert, ich wusste gar nicht, was los war. Ich wusste gar nicht, warum er so sauer war. Äh/ und habe ihn gefragt, was los sei. Und er hat nicht reagiert. Er hat gar nichts gesagt. Nur dann habe ich gedacht: Okay, warten wir mal. Vielleicht sagt er ja in einer Viertelstunde etwas. Und dann habe ich mit den anderen Kindern gearbeitet und er saß stoisch auf seinem Stuhl und hat nach unten geguckt und nichts gemacht und war sauer. Ähm/ (räuspert) und das ist tatsächlich/ das ist die ganze Förderstunde so gegangen. (Jill, Pos. 88) Repairing the bond: Boy approaches the teacher, is honest about being angry at her (signaling trust) S1: Genau, dann hat er äh/ na? Eben die Stunde war dann schon längst vorbei und dann hatten wir wieder anderen äh/ Unterricht und äh/ und dann kam er irgendwann und hat/ hat mich dann/ "Deinetwegen durfte ich jetzt nicht Fußball spielen." (…) Ah, deswegen warst du jetzt die ganze Zeit so sauer. Und jetzt hast du weder Fußball gespielt, noch etwas gelernt. Das ist ja voll blöd. Weder das Eine noch das Andere. L: Mh hm. Also, und wie ist der Moment, für/ wenn er/ wenn er dir das sagt? Deinetwegen (…) konnte ich jetzt nicht Fußball spielen. S1: Ähm/ in dem Moment, war es eigentlich erst einmal eine Erleichterung. Weil ich endlich wusste, was jetzt überhaupt ist. Und im Grunde genommen war es auch eine Erleichterung, dass nicht schon wieder ein Konflikt mit einem anderen Kind (war), den ich jetzt wieder klären muss (lacht). Und deswegen habe ich gedacht: Okay. Okay. Ich war also der Grund. Ich war der Grund. L: Wie würdest du da den/ den Kontakt zu ihm beschreiben? Oder die Atmosphäre, oder die Stimmung zwischen euch. S1: Ähm/ (…) hm (…) (…) puh. Gute Frage. Spannende Frage. Ich hatte tatsächlich so ein Gefühl auf Augenhöhe. So: Ich will etwas, ich will auch etwas. Hm, okay. Hm. Also, ich habe nicht das gekriegt, was ich wollte. Du hast auch nicht gekriegt, was du wolltest. Und jetzt haben wir irgendwie beide nichts gekriegt. Das ist ja irgendwie echt bescheuert, ne? Äh/ (…) und/ aber ich hatte das Gefühl/ also, ja. Aber so ein Kontakt so. Wie soll ich das beschreiben? Also, es war nicht so. Er ist dann ja/ er ist zu mir gekommen und hat mir das dann gesagt. (Jill, Pos. 99-103) S1: Und das finde ich sowieso/ also, das finde ich immer total toll. Wenn ein Kind dann kommt und sagt: Hey, das war jetzt aber so. Und ähm/ (…) äh/ weil/ L: Wenn ein Kind die Dinge anspricht, die für das Kind an der Stelle jetzt nicht gestimmt haben, oder wollte er/ also, //das hat für ihn nicht gestimmt da drin zu sitzen. Er wollte eigentlich etwas Anderes. S1: Ja, genau. Weil/ weil, ne? Weil das// genau, weil dann kann man da wieder mit/ da kann man damit umgehen. Als wenn das so ein ähm/ na, das verflüchtigt sich dann.

	L: Mh hm. Wenn es nicht/ du meinst, wenn es nicht/ was/ was wird es dann, wenn das eine/ S1: Hm. Naja, dann/ dann kann es sozusagen (…) einfach wieder hochkommen, wenn etwas Ähnliches passiert. Ist aber nicht bearbeitet. Und da denkt man: Hey, das war doch vor zwei Wochen schon mal irgendwie so. Und dann baut sich da irgendwie so etwas auf, oder so. Und ähm/ das habe ich in dem Moment tatsächlich sehr geschätzt, dass er das angesprochen hat und dass das damit einfach auf dem Tablett war. So. (…) Und ähm/ (räuspert)/ (Jill, Pos. 102-113) Speaking with him relationally competent: dann habe ich gesagt: Es ist doch jetzt/ es ist doch jetzt echt so richtig doof, ne? Also, dieses/ dieses "Wir haben beide nichts bekommen, von dem was wir eigentlich wollten" (lacht). Irgendwie/ das macht doch keinen Sinn. Das sollten wir irgendwie nicht so fortsetzen. Das macht irgendwie ähm/ äh/ keinen Sinn und dann habe ich/ habe ich gesagt: Okay, also wenn äh/ wenn jetzt/ es gibt ja bestimmte Fußballspiele, die sind eben dann ganz besonders wichtig. Ähm/ (…) aber du merkst ja auch, dass ich möchte, dass du was lernst. Und dass das jetzt nicht irgendwie (lacht)/ ähm/ dass ich da echtes Interesse daran habe und dass es äh/ dass es äh/ und dass er, wenn es wirklich etwas ganz Wichtiges ist. Dass wir vielleicht ein Kompromiss finden können. Dass es bestimmte Situationen gibt, in denen ich ihm dann sage: Okay, heute ist das wichtiger. Und dann kriegen wir aber ein andermal eine Lernsituation wieder hin. (Jill, Pos. 115) Boy not happy, but signals agreement L: Und hast du/ das hast du ihm dann vorgeschlagen dann? Oder wie war das? S1: Ja. L: Okay. Und was/ wie/ wie hat er/ was hast du von ihm dann gehört oder mitgekriegt? S1: Ähm/ er hat dann irgendwie genickt. Er war irgendwie noch nicht glücklich oder so, ne? (lacht) Aber okay. Okay. Gut. Das probieren wir einmal so. Nach dem Motto. (Jill, Pos. 116-119) Being at eye-level Ich hatte tatsächlich so ein Gefühl auf Augenhöhe. (Jill, Pos. 103)
Sad to leave him after grade 6. Seeing risk that he turns into criminal. Also, äh/ ich werde es sehr bedauern, ihn nach der sechsten Klasse (lacht) abgeben zu müssen, weil ich denke, an dem kann man/ der/ also, äh/ der kann noch richtig wachsen ähm/ und an dem kann man aber auch richtig viel kaputtmachen. Und dann ist er ganz schnell/ GANZ schnell in einer kriminellen/ also, richtig/ wirklich in einer/ auf der kriminellen Schiene. (…) Da kann er gut landen. Das ist/ da hat er die besten Voraussetzungen für. (Jill, Pos. 60-65)	

Example F: From rejecting to accepting a relational invitation and building a trusting bond

HABITUAL	SHIFT
SETTING: Initial relation with a boy in her class in the 2nd grade. Boy with "*difficulties in all areas*" in the class (in terms of his abilities, also socially with other students). The teacher felt frustration about his lack of capacities and learning and her helplessness as educator in trying to teach him something. She framed the relation as *"not getting a connection with him."* *Thinking "My god, this child. I don't get a real connection to him. And he never responded to me."* The boy had a hard time tying his shoe laces and putting on his jacket in the winter. Consistently, at the beginning of every break he approached the teacher asking if she could close his jacket.	
	Insight during EMS module: In a dialogue someone pointed out to her that the boy's asking for help is a way he is trying to make contact with her. Acknowledging he consistently was trying to make contact with her as class teacher in particular - and no one else – feelings of joy and responsibility arise.
INNER PROCESS:	
	Interpreting his behavior as his way of trying to make contact with the teacher.

Interpreting his behavior as an expression of his lack of capacities. L: Ja. Also die Interpretation vorher war so: Er kommt her/ S1: Er kann das nicht, weil er es einfach nicht kann. Feeling repelled by his lack of capacities and annoyed by him approaching her. "there he is again. He is still not able to do this by himself? This is terrible." Ich hatte vorher große Schwierigkeiten, ihn in seiner Andersartigkeit anzunehmen. "Ich habe es bloß gar nicht bemerkt." Not noticing that he is trying to make contact with her, to establish a connection.	Expecting that the boy will approach her again. Still thinking that he should practice at home, but not telling him to do so. Feeling more acceptance for the boy. Taking responsibility for her part in the relationship Er hatte ja oft das schon/ aber ich konnte die nicht – wie soll ich sagen? Von meiner Seite aus, hat die Beziehung noch nicht funktioniert gehabt. Genau.
EXPRESSION TO THE BOY: Declining the boy's invitation for contact: Telling him that school is not the right place to learn how to put on his jacket, he should practice this at home.	Greeting the boy with a smile. Responding to his invitation for contact in a friendly way: *"Dear, come here. I will close your jacket quickly."* While closing his zipper, chatting a couple of sentences with him, asking him how he is doing at home. Perceiving that the boy begins to open up *("unfreeze")* and tell her about himself, e.g., his rabbit or the class's dog. Over the course of a couple of weeks, repeating this interaction each time she helps him close the jacket's zipper. Establishing a connection with one another.
RELATIONAL QUALITY: Educator's frustration trying to drag the boy in a direction he could not go. Boy does not respond to her, she does not respond to him. Nicht/ ich hatte mal/ vorher habe ich, glaube ich viel versucht in ihn/ in eine Richtung zu ziehen, ähm/ wo er noch gar nicht war. Wo er gar nicht hinkonnte. Und das hat natürlich gerade bei mir Frust erzeugt. Averting her attention from him. Dass ich äh/ also zwischendurch habe ich dann einfach ähm/ also ignorieren ist schon zu viel gesagt, aber versucht/ also konnte ihn nicht immer so beachten, weil ich immer dachte: Ah, der kann sowieso gar nichts. Also egal, was ich zu ihm sage. Er kann es nicht. So. Und das hat sich verändert. Ähm/ (...) also, ja das ist so/ S1: Bei ihm weiß ich das gar nicht, weil er zu dem Zeitpunkt auch wenig reagiert hat. Also er kann es/ konnte es auch nicht erklären. Also er/ von der/ L: Ja. Also ihm hat es/ er hat nicht reagiert und äh/ S1: Genau. Es war auch einfach zu einem Zeitpunkt, wo ihm alles schwer fiel.	*"Mutual trust "* Acceptance, calm, and accurate perception *diese Kontaktaufnahme kam/ kam von ihm. Ähm/ und das Sehen und ähm/ das Annehmenkönnen ähm/ das hat verändert, dass ich ihn genauer wahrnehmen kann und dass ich ihn vor allem annehmen kann.* *L: Und das, was du/ was du Vertrauensverhältnis ... was zeichnet das aus?* *S1: Also es zeichnet vor allen Dingen aus, dass ich ihn besser wahrnehmen kann. Dass ich ihn besser sehe.* Transparency: A connection which can transmit information both ways, from him to her and from her to him. *Und er/ aber er/ aber diese Beziehung hat sich so doll verbessert und über diese/ über diese Verbindung, die wir jetzt haben, ähm/ habe ich das Gefühl, ich kann viel mehr transportieren, an ihn. (...) Auch von meiner Seite, ne?* A more attuned and supportive way of teaching him based on seeing his developmental phases *S1: Welche Möglichkeiten hat er gerade?// Genau. Und welche Schritte macht er/ also welche// auch im Gehirn sozusagen, wel/ welche Reifeschritte macht er jetzt gerade.* *L: Und was ist möglich, da.* *S1: Wo ist er gerade? An welchen Stellen äh/ kann ich ihn unterstützen äh/ und welches Material ist für ihn gerade das Richtige. Äh/ um ihn an dieser Phase/ klappt nicht immer, ne? Aber ähm/ es ist ähm/ also es ist eine Ruhe reingekommen, in diese/ in die Beziehung, von mir zu ihm.* *S1: Ich kann ihn so annehmen, wie er ist. Und versuchen ihn da anzuleiten. Schritt für Schritt. Ja, ich glaube das hat sich vor allen Dingen verändert. Diese Annahme.* *...* *Sondern sozusagen ihm die/ die Führung zu überlassen. Welchen Schritt kann er wann machen. Und ich äh/ begleite ihn einfach dabei.*

Example G: From stress-contagion to self-regulation

HABITUAL	SHIFT
SETTING: Daily routine with children disrupted by external factors. Receiving the unplanned request to provide space for a visiting school psychologist and two children having to leave class at a particular time point to write a test elsewhere.	
IMPRESSION OF CLASS: Perceiving restlessness in children	
INNER PROCESS: Feeling time pressure Not noticing own stress, being caught by events. *Also ich glaube, mir war vorher immer nicht so bewusst, wann ich gestresst bin. Also man ist dann da so drinnen/ also ich glaube, ich komme jetzt leichter raus aus diesem/ aus dieser Spirale. Oder zumindest erkenne ich, dass sie gerade da ist. (2021_12_10_Hanna, Pos. 374)* Rigidly holding on to own plan *Früher habe ich, glaube ich, verbissener an meinen Vorhaben festgehalten. (2021_12_10_Hanna, Pos. 378)* Conviction that children will be confused if the routine is disrupted.	Noticing own stress Knowing that her own stress contributes to the children's restlessness Knowing she has to regulate her stress in order to calm down the class Realizing that her plan is not feasible under these circumstances suspending the original plan, "breaking free", adapting it to what is actually possible.
EXPRESSION TO THE CLASS	Announcing to the children a new plan which breaks their routine: "No. Stop." "Forget what we have done so far. We start anew!" "We wash our hands now and have breakfast. Get your bread boxes." *EIGENTLICH wollte ich ja noch den Tagesplan besprechen (lacht). Und dann habe ich gesagt so: Nein. Stopp! (…) Wir gehen jetzt Hände waschen und Frühstücken/ erst einmal/ holt die Brotdosen raus. Erstmal und alles/ Tagesplan, Tagesordnung ist egal. (2021_12_10_Hanna, Pos. 370)*
CHILDREN'S REACTION	Perceiving a shift in children: In response to her expression, they become attentive and interested in what she is telling them. Sitting silently, facing her. *"A moment of calm"* Naja in dem Moment, wo ich sage: Stopp. Jetzt machen wir alles anders, sind die Kinder dann gleich erst einmal aufmerksam und/ also wo es vorher schwierig war/ jetzt auf die Plätze, ruhig sein/ jetzt so. Also das war/ und in dem Moment wo ich gesagt habe: Jetzt ist Ende. Das gefällt mir alles nicht. Vergesst alles was passiert ist. Wir fangen noch einmal neu an. Da waren sie dann auch aufmerksam. (2021_12_10_Hanna, Pos. 389)
AFTERWARDS:	A successful morning. Children were *"content"*

Example H: From rigidity and stress-contagion to flexibility and focus

HABITUAL	SHIFT
SETTING: Stand-in-class Difficult, stressful start of the day, class is restless and shaken up. Coming prepared into the class, but noticing, they don't go along with what he has planned. S1: (…) Und hatte das auch schon vorbereitet (…) und die Klasse immer äh/ die waren halt einfach völlig durch den Wind. Und durch und drauf irgendwie. Und äh/ und ich bin schon vorher Meter gelaufen. Also x-mal hin und her, wo ich dachte: Hey, ich laufe eigentlich nur hin und her/ (2021_12_20_Rolf, Pos. 172-174)	
IMPRESSION OF CLASS: Experiencing a contrast between own preparedness and the class's unwillingness or inability to listen to him. Class perceived as restless and loud.	

Und dann kam ich in die Klasse, so gut vorbereitet und (…) die wollten mir einfach nicht so richtig zuhören. Also ich habe es nicht hingekriegt. Ich habe sie nicht so gepackt, so. Und äh/ (…) und dann (…) konnte ich/ ich konnte mich hinsetzen und wollte denen nur eine Linie zeichnen mit dem Lineal, die ich ihnen dann erklären wollte. Und dann sind die total schnell irgendwie (…) unruhig, laut: (2021_12_20_Rolf, Pos. 180)	
INNER PROCESS: Feeling tense, speaking to the class louder and faster than usual Feeling like in a hamster wheel A lack of capacity to see how the students are doing, reduced receptivity to others' mental and affective state *Dieses/ diese Anspannung, das merkst du richtig. //Es zieht sich alles irgendwie so äh/* *L: Ja, ja.//* *S1: Man merkt, dass die (…) die Stimme ein bisschen lauter ist. Man ist schneller irgendwie, beim Reden/* *L: //Ja.* *S1: Und// irgendwie äh/ man hat gar nicht mehr die/ die/ die Kraft, oder die Muse, oder die Zeit, da irgendwie so wirklich äh/ genau zu gucken, wie sind die anderen drauf? Man ist viel mehr, irgendwie, in seinem/* *L: Okay.* *S1: Hamsterrad //irgendwie.* *L: Ja, ja.//* *S1: Man kann gar nicht mehr so gucken, wie einzelne Kinder vielleicht da gerade ein bisschen verzweifeln und da kriegt man das gar nicht mehr so richtig mit. Man kriegt einfach/ also man ist weniger aufnahmefähig und so.* *(Rolf, Pos. 221-230)*	
REACTING TO THE CLASS: Angry at class: Telling the class how it feels for him, accusing them of ruining his day. (taking it personally) *So, es reicht. Und ich muss euch das jetzt mal ganz klar sagen, irgendwie so: Ich komme hier her, irgendwie. Bin vorbereitet. Düdüdüdü, irgendwie na? Irgendwie. Will mit euch etwas Schönes machen und ich habe/ komme hier überhaupt nicht an. Ihr müsst euch mal vorstellen, ihr steht/ du stehst da vorne, ja? Oder einer von euch, der steht hier vorne, will eine Geschichte erzählen, will irgendetwas erzählen und alle schnattern durcheinander. Das ist (…) hm. So, ne? Und so sorgt ihr echt dafür, dass mein Tag gerade den Bach runtergeht. Das habe ich vorgeworfen – ganz schön hart (lacht). Äh/ (…) also es war dann auf jeden Fall ruhig (lacht). (2021_12_20_Rolf, Pos. 180)*	*S1: Naja, ich finde den in der Regel nicht so schön, weil ich äh/ (…) also das Erste, was mir dann irgendwann/ also es packt/ macht so: Knack. Und dann denke ich: (ächzt). Also ich denke dann einfach so: E., was machst du denn gerade für einen (…) scheiß/ irgendwie Job, irgendwie so. Und das fühlt sich nicht gut an. Also man merkt dann wirklich/ ich bin dann irgendwann richtig/ ich werde dem überhaupt nicht gerecht, irgendwie. Meinem Anspruch, äh/ wie ich als //Pädagoge äh/ sein möchte, so und/ (Rolf, Pos. 233)* *S1: Also äh/ so das ist weit davor, so. Aber, äh/ dass man das wirklich so denkt: Och, da hast du eigentlich so einen eigenen, anderen Anspruch irgendwie äh/ und das ist eigentlich auch dein/ dein Stil irgendwie. (…) Und du bist gerade so: Nein, oh Gott. Aber da musst du so. Du musst einfach jetzt (…) Luft holen. Du musst Luft holen.* *L: Ja.* *S1: Du musst wirklich Luft holen. Und man kann – und das habe ich halt gelernt und das finde ich echt cool/ man kann vor den Kindern in der Klasse Luft holen, so. (Rolf, Pos. 243-245)* *wirklich auf sich auch selber zu achten, ne? Äh, aber das wurde durch das Projekt Empathie macht Schule auf jeden Fall noch mehr/ mir klarer oder gefördert irgendwie (2021_12_20_Rolf, Pos. 83)*
IMPRESSION OF CLASS Calm, more able to go along with his task. *"But still totally exhausting"*	
DURING THE BREAK *kann sein, dass ich da natürlich auch irgendwie ganz schön äh/ zackig gewesen wäre und im Ton irgendwie ein bisschen rough irgendwie, äh. Und wenn mir da einer ein bisschen krumm kommt und ich dem auch gleich irgendwie selber zurück krumm komme (2021_12_20_Rolf, Pos. 210)*	Alone in the room noticing that he is still annoyed by the children, thinking that the class could have been further in the content. Noticing body tension and releasing it. *1: Es/ es spannt. Also ich merke wie es sich so ein bisschen in mir spannt, so.* *L: Ja.* *S1: Also vor allem hinten, Schulterblätter.*

With the children during the break: Having a rough tone talking with them. If a child provokes him, attacking it back.	*L: Ja.* *S1: Und/* *L: Dieser/ dieses drücken// dieses/ dieses durchpushen, ist so körperlich/ ist im Körper?* *S1: Genau. Ja, ja. Genau. So. Genau//* *L: Und jetzt merkst du das dann (…) mehr? Gehäuft sag ich mal.* *S1: Genau. Ja, ja, ja. Und ich kann mich dann tatsächlich so richtig hinstellen und äh/ auf beide Beine sozusagen/* *L: Ja.* *S1: Und dann wirklich so: Luft, (…) einfach mal richtig/* *L: Meinst du atmen?* *S1: Richtig Luft holen und so (atmet ein). (2021_12_20_Rolf, Pos. 152-164)* *Und da habe ich gemerkt, dass ich immer noch voll so (schnauft aus). Dass ich total genervt war. Auch von den Kindern, also echt so richtig so: Oh, ich finde das jetzt echt (oll?), irgendwie. Ich hätte schon da sein können und bin nicht dahin gekommen. Und nein, nein, nein. Und dann (…)/ und das war genau der Moment, wo ich dachte: Okay, eigentlich, ey/ es ist wie es ist. Es ist kurz vor Weihnachten. Es ist// das war genau der Moment/ (2021_12_20_Rolf, Pos. 182)*
	AFTER BREAK, children returning to classroom, telling them it is OK to take more time: *For you it seems to be more difficult than I expected, but that is not a big deal.* *Okay, also (…) scheinbar (…) ist es ein bisschen schwieriger als wir zusammen dachten, irgendwie/ (2021_12_20_Rolf, Pos. 187)* *S1: Also, wenn man so richtig da steht und sagt so: (atmet aus) Okay Kinder, so. (…) Manchmal sagt man gar nichts, weißt du? Da langt so ein: (atmet laut ein und aus). Das registrieren Kinder sofort, wenn ein Erwachsener so Luft holt und so ausatmet/ und dann gucken die/ da werden die automatisch auch ruhiger schon. Weil sie auch merken: Hm. Herr R. holt Luft. Wow. So. (Lacht)// So ungefähr, ja? So äh/* *(Rolf, Pos. 253-254)*
	RESONANCE IN CLASS Mood improved among children and himself: More relaxed, ease. Allowing the children to chatter a little bit, and not bursting out. Children do not get as loud. *S1: Die haben ja dann auch äh/ aber ich habe sie auch laufen lassen, dass sie ein bisschen schnattern/ lassen/ irgendwie so also, aber äh/ ich musste nicht mehr/ ich bin nicht mehr hoch gegangen, oder so. Und genau, die Kinder sind auch nicht so laut mehr geworden, ja. (2021_12_20_Rolf, Pos. 201)*

Example I: From withdrawing to attuning to need beneath upset behavior

HABITUAL	SHIFT
SETTING: Special pedagogue: First-time-meeting with a father regarding the school registration of his son who, according to the school doctor's assessment should either wait another year or get special support. Knowing that the father objects to waiting, the educator's task is to obtain his signed consent for the special support application, including a diagnostic assessment by a psychiatrist which the father has to acquire. *Und ich muss die Eltern jetzt einladen und ihnen sagen: Ich brauche ihre Unterschriften auf einem Förderantrag und bitte gehen sie und lassen ein fachärztliches Gutachten erstellen. (2021_12_10_Hanna, Pos. 429)*	
FIRST IMPRESSION In front of the school office, the educator finds the father emotionally upset and arguing with the school secretary, hearing the school secretary tell the father: *"No, you aren't going anywhere here! This is not your task."* Being introduced by the school secretary to the father: "*by the way, this is your appointment who is ranting on the floor here*" *Aber dieser Vater war schon sehr aufgebracht, weil irgendwie er/ eine*	

Tochter/ er in einem höheren Jahrgang hat, die immer Streit hat. Und er wollte eigentlich/ "wenn ich jetzt schon mal hier bin, dann gehe ich jetzt gleich mal da hoch in die Klasse und kläre das." Und die Sekretärin hat eben gesagt: Nein, nein. Sie gehen hier nirgendwo hin (lacht)/ (Hanna, Pos. 446)	

INNER PROCESS	
Feeling *"scared off"* by the father's behavioral expressions (*"he's ranting and quarreling in the hallway and doesn't get what he wants"*) (*"rampage"*)	Feeling safe, confident, and well prepared in her capacity to cope with the father, knowing his anger is not about her.
Feeling insecure and overwhelmed, worrying whether it is safe to be alone in a room with the father. Thinking *"What will happen here? Why do I have to do this?"*	Remembering EMS;
Construing father as *"annoying troublemaker"*	Noticing the father's emotional state, interpreting it as a sign that is in this moment he is not ready to talk about his son; bracketing her intention for the conversation for the moment, intending to calm him down first and taking time for this.
Interpreting father's upset emotional state as not providing a good base for a constructive conversation.	Construing the father as a person who is concerned about his child; focusing on his positive intent lying beneath his upset appearance and behavior [perspective-taking more readily available due to EMS]
Anticipating that the conversation will *"never work out"*	Interpreting the father's concern for his daughter as an entry point and a base for the conversation; confident about also stimulating his concern for his son.
Generally, trying to avoid such parent conversations or insisting on doing them with a colleague.	
S1: Äh/ (…) nein, ich glaube das hätte ich nicht so gut gelöst, hätte ich (…) das nicht gerade so/ es waren ja jetzt die letzten Module auch ziemlich dicht zusammen. Dadurch waren es noch einmal/ ja/ in der konzentrierten Form einfach viel präsenter. *L: Mh hm. Ja.* *S1: Und in der Situation denke ich: Das ist wirklich etwas, wo ich/ also wirklich ganz entspannt, diesen aggressiven Menschen übernommen habe und mich sicher fühlte. Ich setze mich mit dem jetzt gemütlich hin und das kriegen wir hin.* *L: Mh hm. Mh hm.* *S1: Und das ist glaube ich schon/ ja ein ganz großer Schritt, so einen aggressiven Vater/* *L: Ja.* *S1: Ja entspannt mitzunehmen, sage ich mal.* *L: Ja. Ja. Ja.* *S1: Sonst war es immer so: Hua, was jetzt (lacht)?* *L: Ja. Mit/ weniger entspannt?* *S1: Ja. Auf jeden Fall.* *L: Ja. Ja.* *S1: Was kommt jetzt hier? Warum ich schon wieder (lacht)?!* *L: Ja. Ja. Jaja, so eine Sorge, darüber was jetzt passiert. //Und dass es wirklich/* *S1: Genau.// Kann ich wirklich mit ihm alleine in einen Raum gehen (lacht)?* *…* *S1: Ja, ja. Und ich glaube, das ist auch wirklich so eine Situation, wo/ wo ich sagen kann: (…) Da bin ich entspannter geworden und es ist ein deutlicher Unterschied zu vorher. Sonst habe ich schon eher/ ja/ bestimmte Elterngespräche vermieden, oder gesagt: Die mache ich nicht alleine. Oder (…)/ (Hanna, Pos. 507-523)* *S1: Hm, nein. Also es ist ja (seufzt)/ ich weiß nicht. Das ist eine Entscheidung/ eigentlich nicht. Sondern das ist so ein ähm/ (…) also der Blick darauf, dass es ja eigentlich ja ein besorgter Vater ist, der ist glaube ich deutlicher durch die Fortbildung. Ich glaube sonst hätte ich mich auch eher abschrecken lassen, von/ er schimpft und pöbelt gerade auf dem Flur herum und kriegt nicht, was er will.* *S1: Äh/ es ist dann einfach präsenter. In dem Moment erlebt man einen Menschen, der sehr unfreundlich ist und denkt sich: Ach herrje, das ist mein Termin? Mit der/ der soll mir jetzt einen Förderantrag unterschreiben (lacht)? Das klappt ja im Leben nicht. So. Da regt er sich gerade auf und jetzt soll er mit seinem Sohn noch zum Psychiater gehen. Das ist keine gute Grundlage*	*S1: Ja, also es ist natürlich etwas Anderes, wenn man da einen schimpfenden, pöbelnden äh/ also äh/ Frau B. war schon so, mit Augenzwinkern: Das ist übrigens dein Termin, der da gerade schimpfend auf dem Flur steht, so (lacht). Also/ und ich muss sagen, ich habe ihn wirklich äh/ entspannt übernommen und fühlte mich dem gewappnet. Weil ich wusste ja/ er ärgert sich gerade nicht über mich, (…) ähm/ (Hanna, Pos. 489)* *S1: Genau.// Zu sagen: Okay, lieber … Höre ich mir jetzt fünf Minuten an, was ihn eigentlich so geärgert hat. (Hanna, Pos. 472-474)* *S1: Naja (…). Ich habe halt den/ ja/ besorgten Vater (…) zu sehen. Also es war äh/ es war dann nicht ein lästiger Querulant, der nicht tut, was ich will. Sondern … Da saß jemand, der sich Sorgen um seine Tochter macht und den ich dann auch dazu bringen konnte, (…) sich Gedanken über seinen Sohn zu machen. Also/ (Hanna, Pos. 476-478)* *S1: Das ist eher so ein Gefühl, bei solchen Gesprächen.// Aber, ich da/ da habe ich mich absolut sicher gefühlt und fühlte mich auch kein bisschen überfordert, sondern ich habe dem wirklich (…) – so aggressiv, wie er da auf dem Flur war tobte – trotzdem ganz entspannt mitnehmen können. (Hanna, Pos. 527)* *S1: Und ich musste jetzt diesen aufgebrachten Vater, den ich eingeladen hatte für dieses Fördergespräch/ für dieses jüngere Kind, erst einmal herunterkochen. Ähm/ (…) ja, er war eigentlich auch mit ganz anderen Dingen beschäftigt. Und da habe ich dann wirklich/ also ich hatte mir vorher dann schon überlegt. Ich hatte die Info, dass das Kind sollte besser zurückgestellt werden. Das will er aber nicht. Und dann war er, als er da war, aber aufgebracht über die Probleme, die seine Tochter gerade hat. (…) Und dann habe ich mich erinnert, was wir gelernt haben (schmunzelt) (…) und habe mir erst einmal angehört, was ihn denn jetzt gerade ärgert und habe interessiert nachgefragt: In welcher Klasse ist denn seine Tochter? Mit welchen Kindern hat sie denn/ habe eben gesagt: Ich verstehe das total (lacht), dass er sich da aufregt und ihn das aufbringt und/ ach die Klassenlehrerin ist gerade krank- natürlich, das ist dann ja auch schwierig. Ich kümmere mich darum und ähm/ habe ihm dann aber auch klargemacht: Also er, als Vater, dürfte nicht mit irgendwelchen fremden Kindern sprechen. (Hanna, Pos. 448)*

EXPRESSION TO THE FATHER	Showing interest in his perspective, inquiring about it, and taking time to listen to him.
Sticking to her intention and plan for the conversation.	

Giving less or no time to regulate the father's emotional state. S1: Ja. Ja und ich weiß auch nicht, ob es mir gelungen wäre, ihm in seinem Ärger über die Konflikte seiner Tochter, so gut abzuholen. L: Mh hm. Mh hm. Also das/ S1: Und mir wirklich die Zeit zu nehmen, um zu sagen: Okay, ne? Ich will eigentlich etwas Anderes, aber er ist ja gar nicht/ er war noch gar nicht bereit, //sich über seinen Sohn Gedanken zu machen. (Hanna, Pos. 468-470)	Expressing understanding for his upset, and the difficulties in this situation and offering support. Inquiring further about the conflict with the secretary. Underscoring the rule that he is not allowed to talk to other children. Pointing out that, reversely, he would not agree if other students' fathers wanted to approach his daughter in such a way either. *Und konnte ihn dazu/ und dann hat er auch noch einmal gesagt so: Ja und ich habe es schon so oft gesagt und es passiert nie etwas. Und ich habe gesagt: Aber dann stellen sie sich doch mal vor, ein anderer Vater kommt und möchte irgendetwas mir ihrer Tochter klären. Das wäre ihnen ja auch nicht recht. Und dann war das schon einmal/ das Thema für ihn so/ Ach ja, okay. (Hanna, Pos. 450)* Father signals his agreement and understanding. Noticing that he was convinced by that argument, could accept, and go along with that. Then, turning to the actual topic of their meeting.
CONVERSATION ABOUT HIS SON Following her *"strategy"* of underscoring to the father that *"you are the expert for your child"*, while inwardly struggling to accept his view. *S1: Ja, weil es war sonst schon auch meine Strategie, den Eltern zu sagen: Sie sind Experte für ihr Kind, aber ich glaube ähm/ ich hätte (…)/ also es wäre mir schwerer gefallen, das zu akzeptieren, wenn ich doch der Meinung bin, dass das Kind lieber noch ein Jahr in der Kita bleiben sollte. (Hanna, Pos. 466)*	Starting by *"meeting him where he is"* and creating a common understanding: *"I have understood that you do not want your child to stay in kindergarden another year."* Inquiring about the father's reasons for his opinion. Explaining her situation to him, being open and explicit about her limited knowledge about his son which is only based on the doctor's examination. Authentically accepting his decision. Espousing that *"you are the expert for your child"*, with an attitude of acceptance for his opinion Perceiving father as *"very cooperative"*

Example J: From power struggle to eye-level collaboration

HABITUAL	SHIFT
SETTING: Fördergespräch: about a student, 2 EMS participants (teacher & special pedagogue), with father and mother. Interpreting the dynamics within the power hierarchy between parents and teachers: Habitually, with some parents, conversations tend to enact a power relationship: Teacher higher in the hierarchy, having an *"evil message"* for the parents, parents listen. Some (fathers) try to rebute that relation & struggle for power. Das ist so ein klassisches äh/ Eltern-Lehrer-Ding, ne? So, wo eben die Hierarchie eigentlich klar ist und der/ (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 159) *Na, die Eltern wollen ja etwas hören. Beziehungsweise die Lehrer wollen ja etwas sagen, ne? Man hat ja immer die Botschaft, die böse Botschaft dabei. Und im Prinzip dieses/ also diese Augenhöhe wird zu selten erreicht - beiderseitig, ne? Und es gibt aber diese/ diese/ sag ich mal kämpferischen äh/ vornehmlich Väter. Also meistens Väter, nicht vornehmlich. Seltener Frauen. Die dann aber UNBEDINGT das eben verkehren wollen, dass sie erst einmal dem Lehrer irgendwie Bescheid pfeifen. Also/* Expecting the conversation with these parents to become challenging. In the past, having formed an image of the parents as generally skeptical and closed towards school and of the father as bossy and dominating in conversations.	Preparing for the conversation with the intention to practice creating a good collaboration. To this end, intending to attune to the parents in the moment. Being attentive and receptive for the parents and their inner (affective) state in the here-and-now during the conversation "where the parents are, how they are doing." *Es war uns bewusst, es ist ein herausforderndes Elternpärchen und wir haben uns explizit darauf vorbereitet, mit dem Wissen aus dem Modul fünf. Indem wir gesagt haben: Okay, wir gucken immer ganz genau hin. Wo sind jetzt gerade die Eltern? Was ist mit denen? Und nehmen die mit, indem wir immer wieder sagen: Wir sehen das als unsere gemeinsame Aufgabe an.*
OPENING THE CONVERSATION Early on, feeling irritation about father's wheezing Interpreting father's wheezing as an expression of his lack of respect and attempt to dominate. Impulse to defend against his aggression, reciprocate it, restore own	Noticing own anger about father's wheezing, being annoyed by own anger. Knowing about herself that she habitually reacts to aggression with counteraggression. Noticing this as potential starting point for well-known and despised struggle.

power position. Reducing own willingness to engage in the conversation. Sticking to own fixed interpretations about the father. *Sonst hätte ich halt meine Interpretationen einfach in meinem/ in meinem Kopf abgespult. (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 183)* *Weil eigentlich, wenn jemand so wie er vor mir sitzt. (imitiert schnaufen des Vaters) Ja? Dann macht mich das innerlich schon so aggressiv, dass ich so denke: Alles klar soweit, ne? Und dann auch/ ich unterstelle ihm eine/ eine geringe Gesprächsbereitschaft und werde auch automatisch wenig/ weniger gesprächsbereit. (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 144)* *Und dann macht der/ denken wir immer/ mit diesem ganzen Korpus an Ideen im Kopf äh/ so ein Schnaufen bezieht sich auf "Ich habe keinen Respekt", ne? Da haben wir ja dann alle auch unsere Ideen dann dazu. Der hat keinen Respekt vor uns Frauen. Will erst mal zeigen, wer er eben, ne?/ Dass er die Machtposition hat. Das sind ja unsere inneren Ideen dazu. (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 165)* *Ja. So die Interpretation// die dann kommen würden/* *S1: Genau. Genau. Die mich aber dann//* *L: So würdest du dieses Schnaufen interpretieren eigentlich.* *S1: Ja. Und die mich dann aber in eine Verteidigung bringen, ne?* *L: Und dann fängst du an dich zu verteidigen.* *Und er so: Hm. Ja was schnauft der denn? Also das wären dann eher noch so meine Gedanken. (…) Langweilt ihn das? Also/* *L: Wie würdest du da dann so die Atmosphäre beschreiben, in/ in der Art von/* *S1: Na, feindselig.* *L: Feindselig.* *S1: Feindselig direkt, ja. Also wo ich so denken würde: Am liebsten würde ich dir jetzt sagen "Weißt du? Wenn es dir nicht gefällt, wenn dich deine Tochter nicht interessiert, dann warte bitte vor der Tür. Dann kläre ich das mit deiner Frau." Und also/ ne? Wirklich. So wirklich ausladend. Nein, komm. So will ich nicht.* *(2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 147-152)*	Intending to create a different conversation this time. *Ähm/ tatsächlich habe ich gemerkt, wie mich das Schnaufen wahnsinnig aufregt und ich über dieses Aufregen aufgeregt war. Also genervt war. Genervt war. Jetzt geht das schon wieder los. Schon wieder so ein Atze/ also ein Atze, ne? Ähm/ (…) und //dann/ der Ärger war und dieses "Oh nein, jetzt nicht schon wieder so ein Kampf." Wir sitzen jetzt hier, weil wir das einfach anders machen wollen und gut haben wollen. Und uns verständigen wollen. Und Herrgott nochmal w/ wir könnten uns doch auf einer ganz anderen Ebene mal treffen. Bitteschön. (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 204)*
EXPRESSION TO THE PARENT: Sticking to her fixed interpretation of father. interacting in an aggressive mood; avoiding verbally attacking him, but expressing power position in indirect, non-verbal ways *S1: (…) Na, den Anderen in einer (…)/ ich hätte sonst nie nach dem Schnaufen gefragt. Oder also/ (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 177)* *S1: Genau und äh/ ich hasse ja dieses Rechtfertigen und Verteidigen. Ich versuche das in meinen Worten nicht auftauchen zu lassen. Aber in meiner Art werde ich dann halt sehr bestimmt. Na? Und denke mir dann: So. Dann reden wir/ dann rede ich jetzt anders mit dir, ne? Und das reicht ja dann auch schon, um wieder die Machtposition klarzumachen (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 166-171)*	Suspending own interpretation of the trigger (father's wheezing) and inquiring about it (inspired by EMS). *"You are wheezing. Are you not well?"* Father explains his dislike of masks. Accommodating his dislike, collaborating in finding a solution for him Interpreting that father felt seen, perceiving him softening. *Sie schnaufen so. Äh/ worum/ was/ geht es ihnen nicht gut? Und dann hat er die Maske thematisiert. Und dann haben wir gesagt: Okay. Wie können wir das lösen? Fenster auf. Tür auf. Weit/ noch weiter entfernt. Und dann war ihm das ausreichend genug. Dann fühlte er sich gesehen, mit seiner Empfindlichkeit und überhaupt auch in seiner Meinung. Was er von Masken hält. (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 128)*
CONVERSATION ABOUT THE CONTENT Usually, the father would have tried to dominate the conversation, and finished it after 15 minutes. *S1: normalerweise hätte nur er gesagt: Na, nun zeigen sie mal her. Zeigen sie mal. Zeigen sie mal. Erklären sie mal. Erklären sie mal. Hm. Das sehe ich anders: Erklären sie mal. Nein, das sehe ich anders. Und dann wäre ähm/ (seufzt) ja, so nach zehn/ naja vielleicht 15 Minuten wäre das Gespräch/ hätte er es für beendet erklärt. Und wäre sehr lautstark polternd aus dem Raum raus. (2021_12_16_Julia, Pos. 138)*	Inviting parents' collaboration as partners: Consistently highlighting that this is a shared task for educators and parents. Asking parents for their contribution in deciding: *"How do we proceed now? What do you think is realistic?"* Showing own limitations openly: When parents asked a question, responding with *"I don't know. … Interesting question. Thank you… Let's see what ideas come up."* *ich bin halt auch bloß Mensch. Und genau das macht dann die Gemeinsamkeit da aus. Ja.*
RELATIONAL QUALITY Hostile atmosphere	*"This one thing at the beginning [inquiring about the wheezing] turned the atmosphere of the conversation into a bunch of flowers."* Balancing contributions: Father relaxing, calming down, leaning back; not exclusively focusing on the negative, but contributing with positive aspects.

	Mother takes active part in conversation.
	Atmosphere "more colorful," "more personal"
	"Extensive, mutually respectful conversation" "on an eye-level"

Meso-Level

School (Example)	Code	Quote
1: "It cost us a lot of sweat to find togetherness"	Pre-training: Contagious negative affect and cynicism	Und wir merken gerade, dass dieser Punkt/ Also nicht kippt, aber dass/ wir haben vorhin gesagt, wir haben gedacht, die Masern seien ausgerottet. [...] Aber sie SIND gar nicht ausgerottet. An ein paar Stellen bricht jetzt hier und da wieder was auf. Das haben wir vorhin völlig verschreckt festgestellt. Dass gerade so Verhaltensweisen aufbrechen, von denen wir dachten: Och ey, was hat uns das Schweiß und was nicht alles gekostet, um bestimmte Kultur und ein Miteinander zu finden und wie/ so ein bisschen wie bei der Erziehung bei Kindern, wo man denkt, also jetzt hat man einen Entwicklungsschritt gemacht und als wenn einem dieser Entwicklungsschritt Angst macht, holt man den Bock nochmal raus. (Leader_B_1, Pos. 76-78) S1: Also, ich glaube, ähm, für mich war immer das ich den An/ am Anfang den Eindruck hatte, vor sieben-acht Jahren, dass mir keiner glaubt. Und zwar nicht, weil sie mich doof finden oder ich so, weiß ich nicht. Sondern, das nicht gewöhnt sind. Oder/ Das braucht ja auch Zeit, bis man jemandem glauben kann und sich an jemanden so gewöhnt und auch merkt, dass man also nicht nur dann ernsthaft ist, wenn man immer nur ganz ernst rüberkommt. Ich glaube, man musste damit erst umgehen lernen. Das Kollegium hat sich verändert. Und das heißt, wir sind insgesamt schon an einem Punkt, wo ich glaube ein Vertrauen da ist. (Leader_B_1, Pos. 74)
	Shift from affect contagion to embodied presence	Also dadurch, dass ich merke, dass sich in der Beziehung was verändert, dass wenn ich mehr auf mich gucke, dass sich dann die Qualität der Beziehung einfach verändert. Und das hat halt nicht nur was hier in der Schule mit den Kindern zu tun, das hat was mit meinen Kollegen zu tun. Ich kann da teilweise wirklich, wenn ich dann mal durchatme. (atmet hörbar) Es wird nicht alles so heiß gegessen, wie es gekocht wird (Franziska, Pos. 150)

		S3: Die Verhaltensweise der Kollegin ist nicht nochmal aufgetaucht. Es gab durchaus Situationen, wo es nochmal zu Konflikten hinterher kam, und da war die/ die, ich will sagen, die Angst vor der Person, also dieser Moment, so überrumpelt zu werden, das passiert schon noch mit der Person und die ist aber nicht mehr da. Aber die Überrumplung findet nicht mehr statt. Also ich hatte dann ja gerade neulich gab es einen Moment mit genau dieser Kollegin, wo ich wahrgenommen habe, jetzt kommt dieses, ich tauche ganz plötzlich auf und stelle mich vor vollendete Tatsachen mit meinem Wesen, was ich so habe, und das hat mich nicht dazu gebracht, irritiert sozusagen nur noch spontan zu reagieren. Sondern ich konnte auch runterfahren, konnte mich da irgendwo auch besinnen auf das, was mir wichtig war und hab das zurückgeben können. Also hab mich davon nicht beeinflussen lassen. (Leader_B_3, Pos. 35) L: Und wie nehmt ihr das dann im Kontakt direkt wahr? Also dass die sich zurückziehen und nicht so öffnen, oder? S3: Nee. Die sind schon geerdet. S2: Die sind engagiert in diesem Bereich. Die interessiert, dass es in der Schule weitergetragen wird. Die bezeichnen das als wertvoll. S3: Nicht so schnelles Reagieren. Nicht sofort auf alles. Erstmal sacken lassen. (Leader_B_3, Pos. 23-24)
	Shift from cynicism to compassion (and self-care)	S1: (…) (…) Also es ist schwer. Ich hatte auf jeden Fall ein (…)/ bei einem äh/ bei einem Modul äh/ mit einer Kollegin von mir ein Gespräch geführt (…) und das war dieses zehn Minuten reden. (…) Zehn Minuten äh/ zuhören, ne? Das könnte/ (…) (…) und das war ganz schön krass, weil die (…) Kollegin bei den zehn Minuten reden äh/ (…) ein bisschen weggeknickt ist. Wenn man das so sagen kann. Also sie hatte wirklich äh/ ein hartes Thema irgendwie. Und dann echt/ also sehr persönlich war es dann so. Und ich glaube sie wollte, das hat sich auch gesagt. Sie dachte/ es geht ihr gar nicht mehr so nah und es ging ihr sehr nah und sie hat dann echt so geweint und äh/ also

		es war wirklich ganz schön intensiv. Und dann hat man erst mal so ein bisschen gebraucht und ich konnte auch gar nicht gleich/ glaube wir haben das dann auch gelassen, die den anderen zehn Minuten, weil/ dass ich dann zehn Minuten rede/ weil ich glaube das war dann gar nicht mehr so richtig möglich. So wir haben das //nochmal ganz kurz [P SEP] L: Also da kam so //etwas Intensives bei ihr hoch //und dann seid ihr/ [P SEP] S1. Genau, genau, genau.// [P SEP] L: Ja. Ja. [P SEP] S1: Und äh (…)/ ja und das hat schon etwas gemacht. Also erstmal natürlich auch gegenüber der Kollegin //irgendwie, ne? [P SEP] L: Ja.// Was hat das gemacht, gegenüber der Kollegin? [P SEP] S1: Also für uns war das schon klar irgendwie, also sie/ sie hat ja auch darum gebeten, irgendwie, (lacht)/ dass man/ sie meinte: Puh, das ist mir aber jetzt auch unangenehm und so. [P SEP] L: Ja. [P SEP] S1: Und ich meinte: Das muss dir jetzt doch nicht unangenehm sein und äh/ sie meinte dann so: Ja, mein Gott/ und dass/ ich will ja nicht, dass jeder das so mitkriegt. Ich so: Ja, das ist mir schon klar, ich habe dir ja auch nur zugehört. Also ich will auch nicht darüber jetzt/ mit hausieren gehen und so, ne? Also/ und da kommt man dann auf ein anderes Vertrauensding, finde ich. Das hat das dann gemacht. Beziehungsweise was es auch noch gemacht hat ist natürlich äh/ was klar ist, dass (…) jeder Kollege eigentlich wahrscheinlich so etwas hat und in jedem das drinsteckt, irgendwie. Und, dass man da einfach auch bestimmte Sachen auch sensibler angeht, so. Und eine Schule äh/ ist ja unter Kollegen, sage ich mal, (…) oft ein (…)/ auch so ein bisschen derber (…) Galgenhumor. Gerade wenn so ein Notstand ist und so, ne? Dann (…) haut man mal schnell so einen Spruch raus, irgendwie und ich glaube, dass ich damit versuche vorsichtiger zu werden, oder genauer zu gucken, wann das wirklich/ es gibt Situationen, da muss man den gegenüber auch mal äh/ tatsächlich auch mal so kurz (…) abchecken irgendwie, bevor/ also, oder man muss/ also bestimmt auf so/ so Stimmungen und Schwingungen so achten, weil (…) es kann ganz einfach sein, dass der Kollege das normalerweise wegsteckt, wie nichts, ja? Irgendwie/ oder man macht so etwas irgendwie. Man ist das gewohnt irgendwie: Naja! So. Und geht da so darüber und (…)/ und mit einem Mal haut es den Kollegen aber um, ja? Und äh/ und du weißt gar nicht was los war eigentlich. Ähm, da habe ich doch nichts gemacht und so, ne? Also ich finde, dass man da/ ich finde, dass man auch im Ton untereinander/ oder ich versuche da ein bisschen mehr darauf zu achten, dass man da wirklich auch (…) ein bisschen genauer zuhört einfach. Ein bisschen/ auch mal/ nicht nur zuhört, sondern einfach nur mal guckt und auch nonverbale Sprache auch mal liest, irgendwie. Ich finde das hat

		das eigentlich so gemacht. (Rolf, Pos. 101-110)
		S1: Wenn man das nicht so mit Begegnungen jetzt benennen kann, dann kann ich ja bei mir bleiben. Also es ist schon so, dass ich das bewusster wahrmache. Also auf mich achte. Ich weiß jetzt nicht, aus welchen Gründen, aber tatsächlich so, dass ich sehr wohl gucke/ Also ich merke, wenn ich in bestimmte Situationen komme und ich sehe, das geht jetzt in richtung Überforderung. Dann kann ich schon bewusst einen Schritt zurück/ oder MUSS ich vielleicht auch, aber ich geh da tatsächlich auch bewusst einen Schritt zurück. Atme erstmal (lacht). Nee, jetzt musst du erstmal langsam machen. (Leader_B_3, Pos. 28)
1) "we are well on our way in this change process"	Pre-training: Appreciative atmosphere	SL: Ja, ein Hauptpunkt ist immer, immer, dass wir versuchen, ne gute Kommunikation hinzubekommen, sowohl mit den Kollegen, als auch mit den Eltern...als auch mit den Kindern, als auch mit unserem Büro...das ist eigentlich n Schwerpunkt unserer Arbeit und das...und vor allem, dass wir miteinander versuchen zu reden...dass wir miteinander sprechen, dass versuchen wir sowohl strukturell irgendwie hinzubekommen, indem wir viele Gesprächszeiten ermöglichen, als auch inhaltlich (lachend) irgendwie gut hinzubekommen, ähm, dass wir die Gespräche so führen...hoffen wir...ja.[...] dass eine ...wertschätzende Atmosphäre...eine gute Atmosphäre dabei ist... (Leader_A_1, Pos. 46-51) S1 (post-interview): Also jeder der hier arbeitet, arbeitet vor allen Dingen hier, weil das Kollegium so toll ist. Das ist so das/ der große Konsens, den jeder mehr oder minder trägt. Aber das stimmt schon. Es ist wirklich ein angenehmes Kollegium äh/ was viele Herausforderungen zusammen besteht. (Julia, Pos. 390)
	Tendency to avoid conflicts	SL: ...ein Konflikt ist, ... (überlegt)..vielleicht manchmal...nicht früh genug und nicht klar genug ins Gespräch zu gehen. Und die Erwartungen... ... zu ... zu benennen. Klar zu benennen (Leader_A_1, Pos. 404-407) A (co-leader): Ich weiß es nicht, ob`s immer gelingt `ne gute Perspektive einzunehmen, also von meiner Seite aus, was die Kollegen betrifft sowohl, was die Erwartungen betrifft, als auch ... was ... mmmh... als auch, was ihr ... ihre Kommunikation untereinander betrifft, ob des gut wahrgenommen wird...und ihre Arbeitsbedingungen. Also, ob des wirklich immer gelingt, ob die

		Kommunikation untereinander gut is...und ähm...ob die... ob die Bedingungen gut eingeschätzt werden, die Erwartungen zu hoch sind oder zu niedrig, und ob wir das richtig und gut einschätzen. Ob wir da gut, ...also ICH! da genug auf die Menschen eingehe...? Also diesen Blick genug habe, auf die andere Seite zu gucken oder zu sehr von meiner Seite aus zu schauen und alles rosarot zu schauen was gar nicht rosa-rot is, zum Beispiel, ne? SL: mhm A: zu denken: Whaa, is alles ...schön...und unter Umständen is es gar nicht so, wie man`s denkt (Leader_A_1, Pos. 413-435) SL: "So reden wir an dieser Schule nicht!" (lacht) [co-leader]: (lachend) Ja! Beide lachen SL: "s is unser Lieblingssatz." (Leader_A_1, Pos. 129-132)
	Pattern "shaken up"	S2: Also es ist ein großartiges Programm. Und es hat so viele Facetten. Vielleicht ist es das? Das dieses Wort Beziehung in Schule nochmal doll neu definiert hat. Aber die ist noch nicht/ Die Definition ist noch nicht neu geschrieben jetzt bei mir. Ja. Ok. (Leader_A_3, Pos. 425) S1: Ein lebendiges, tolles Kollegium ist der Hauptsatz. IMMER, wenn wir Bewerber hier haben, sagen wir, wir haben ein tolles Kollegium hier und das stimmt auch. S2: Es ist normalerweise voll engagiert und hat auch Lust, etwas zu verändern. Und jetzt war es eher, ja, nicht mürrisch. Sondern/ es schwer zu sagen. Also ich bin noch bei diesem, wie waren sie? Und wie war die Beziehung? Weil das finde ich total spannend, weil ich das total spannend finde. Sie waren frustriert, nein. Sie waren/

		S1: Na, auch ein Stück aggressiv.
		S2: Sie waren aggressiv. Auch so ein bisschen depressiv. Also es ist wirklich schwer zu sagen. Es war eine Mischung aus so vielem. (Leader_A_3, Pos. 217-220)
		S1: Ja, ja. Ganz klar. Das ist im Moment sogar ein bisschen unser Thema. Die Beobachtung geht so ein bisschen dahin, dass/ [co-leader] hat das die Tage schon schön gesagt mit Helles Buch: Die Kollegen sind sehr bei sich. Und der Blick auf das Andere, den vermissen wir im Moment ein BISSCHEN. Der ist/ Es ist stärker gerichtet auf die eigene Person und so dieses/ ja, hellwach/
		S2: Hellwach fehlt.
		S1: Das Hellwach, hat [co-leader] richtig gut gesagt. Ja, das Hellwach fehlt. Wie geht es den Anderen und wie geht es meinem Team und wie kommen wir gut zusammen, wie leben wir gut miteinander. Das ist vielleicht auch unsere Wahrnehmung, aber so empfinde ich es im Moment ein bisschen. (Leader_A_3, Pos. 100-102)
		S2: Ja. Und auch/ Ja. Ja. // Ja, und auch UNS gegenüber. Auch wir haben es uns/ Wir haben es auch für uns/ Also ICH hab es auch für mich empfunden, sag ich mal. Also ich hab auch gedacht: Oah nee. So sprechen wir einfach nicht miteinander. Und auch nicht mit mir, ne? Also ich hab auch mich. Ich finde es nicht schön, wenn so mit mir gesprochen wird. Das war das Eine, was anders war. Und das Andere war, dass wir so sprechen. Also dass wir jetzt dann zurück so sprechen. Ne? Das war das Andere. Unsere Bitte war zu kommen, was steckt eigentlich dahinter, im Moment/ (Leader_A_3, Pos. 176)
	Shift from Homogeneity to Integration	S1: [context after EMS supervision on a conflict among faculty]: Ja. // Und ich hatte auch das Gefühl, es ist TRAGfähig. Also ich hatte nicht Sorge Ohhh, was passiert jetzt wieder? Sondern ich hatte wirklich das Gefühl, das ist auch tragfähig.

		L: Was ist tragfähig?
		S1: Die, die Beziehung dann wieder zu der Person.
		L: Ja. Und das zeigt sich tragfähig/ Das heißt dann kann was passieren, wenn das tragfähig/
		(…) (…) (…)
		S1: Wir haben ja in der Sitzung auch gut benennen können, was das ist und wie es uns damit gegangen ist. Und es ist ja/ ich glaub, das ist ein Weg, der sich hier jetzt auch ein bisschen einspielt jetzt. Zwischen Ganztagsleitung und uns/ so ein bisschen. Das meine ich mit tragfähig. Dass wir es vielleicht besser benennen können.
		L: Ah besser benennen können. Ok. Also, was könnt ihr besser benennen?
		S1: Wenn etwas in Schieflage gerät. Dass wir erst gar nicht // an diesen (klatscht in die Hände) kommen. (Leader_A_3, Pos. 326-333)
		S1: Ja. Und eigentlich dachten Alle/ VIELE – natürlich denken nicht alle so – dass es ein großer Einheitsbrei ist. Wir alle/ also das kriegt man so in der Gesamtkonferenz mit. Dann glauben immer alle für alle sprechen zu können. Die sprechen ja nicht von sich. Die sprechen immer gleich für ALLE mit. (Julia, Pos. 444)
2) "Constantly under attack"	Pre-training: Blaming and defending	S1: weil wir … wir haben gerade sozusagen attestiert bekommen, Ähm, von der Schulinspektion eine ganz schlechte Wahrnehmung, So im Sinne von: Da war das einer der Kritikpunkte, dass es keine wertschätzende Kommunikation unter den Akteuren gibt. ähm… das wird mir auch immer mal wieder von paar Kollegen berichtet, die vielleicht nicht in der, in der Mitarbeiter Hierarchie ein bisschen untenan sind, vermeintlich, dass sie, dass so das Verhältnis zwischen Lehrkräften,

		Erzieherinnen, Erziehern und Sozialarbeitern oft auch geprägt ist, von einem missgünstigen Miteinander oder auch… L: Also zwischen den Gruppen? S1: Zwischen den Gruppen. Gehässigem Reden übereinander, dem jeweiligen unterstellen, der jeweils andere Akteur arbeitet nicht genug. Mir gegenüber, sind eigentlich immer alle freundlich. Aber das liegt vielleicht auch natürlich in der Funktion des Schulleiters. Also insofern, weil man ja eine Art Vorgesetzter da ist, dann auch. Ähmm. Ich empfinde, kann das nicht empfinden, in, in, in der direkten Interaktion mit mir sind immer alle sehr freundlich. Manchmal im Bereich des Emailverkehrs. Es gibt schon ein paar Kollegen wo ich ein bißchen eine gewisse Enthemmung da sehe, da wo man eher vielleicht auch mal denkt: Da ist jemand unzufrieden oder so. Aber insgesamt geht es mir sowie [co-principal], dass ich eigentlich denke, dass es eigentlich hier bei aller Belastung, die doch sehr stark ist, eigentlich ein gutes Verhältnis ist, wie es sich ja oft so ergibt, wenn man `ne herausfordernde Situation hat, dass die reihen sich schließen sozusagen. (Leader_C_1, Pos. 16-22)
	Pattern persists, despite attempts to promote change	Aber ähm/ am meisten hat mich überzeugt, dass die Schulleitung das [EMS Training] auch durchlaufen muss. Und ich ja ganz viel Entwicklungsbedarf auf Schulleitungsebene sehe. (Hanna, Pos. 11) Und es ist sozusagen, ich/ die Schule äh/ an unserer Schule brennt es ja auch an/ an vielen Ecken und Kanten immer mal wieder. Und dann wird es mal wieder ein bisschen ruhiger. Aber gerade auch als wir das letzte Modul hatten, gab es auch wieder viele äh/ viele Irritationen, die die gesamte Schule betroffen haben. Schulleitung und so weiter. Dann hatten wir ja auch viele/ haben eine Reihe von Kollegen Belastungsanzeigen gestellt. Ähm/ und dann gab es sozusagen auch ähm/ viel Missmut über bestimmte Entscheidungen, die innerhalb der Schule getroffen wurden und ähm/ das war gerade sehr ähm/ präsent auch. Als wir die letzten/ als die letzten zwei Module stattgefunden haben. Wo ich zum Beispiel auch etwas über die Schule erfahren habe, deren Empathie macht Schule hatte überhaupt nichts mit Empathie macht Schule zu tun. Ähm/ äh/ aber wo ich die äh/ auch sehr geschluckt habe: Oh Gott, wo geht das jetzt wieder hin? Also, das nimmt

| | | einen ja dann auch immer wieder äh/ na, hatte ich das Gefühl: Na super, Empathie macht Schule. Eigentlich will ich ja Empathie macht Schule machen und jetzt ist mein Gehirn von ganz anderen Sachen äh/ wird es belegt, ne? Na? Das fand ich tatsächlich äh/ ziemlich schwierig. (Jill, Pos. 42) |
| | Shift from Defending to Listening | Also auch/ In dem einen Fall war das so, aus dem einen Seminar ging ich dann auch selbst raus als Schulleiter; das ist gut, wenn du mal angegriffen wirst. In meiner Rolle wird man ja ständig angegriffen. Ob das jetzt Lehrkräfte selber sind, die ihren Unmut äußern. Oder Eltern. Schüler jetzt eigentlich nicht so, aber, sagen wir mal so, Eltern und Lehrer können ja auch sehr massiv reden. Ähm, dass ich dann merk, ich hab so eine Tendenz, wo ich denke, das gehört dazu, dass man das ERKLÄRT das eigene Handeln, so. Das ist vielleicht auch kognitiv nachvollziehbar, dass ich das sage, aber es hat dann schnell so einen Rechtfertigungscharakter. Und dann bist du eigentlich im Gespräch mit deinem Partner nicht unbedingt weiter, wenn du ihnen das zwar alles gut erklären kannst, aber du ihn trotzdem nicht emotional mitgenommen hast vielleicht. Und dann hat das immer so eine Verteidigungshaltung. Und dann hatten wir in dem einen Seminar, dass es wichtig ist, erstmal so bei sich zu bleiben, wenn man auch angegriffen wird. Verbal oder mit Argumenten. Oder man muss sich gegenüber der Schulrätin rechtfertigen oder so, dass man dann erstmal die Beine auf den Boden und erstmal ausatmen und die ausreden lassen, weil die wollen dir ja auch was sagen. Nicht zu früh eingrätschen und sagen, ja, aber jetzt erklär ich Ihnen das mal, warum ich mich so entschieden habe. So, das wollen die ja gar nicht hören. Die wollen sich ja auch erstmal ausbreiten. Und haben sich da auch Gedanken gemacht. Das fand ich, waren gute und auch praktische Hinweise, die ich da mitnehmen konnte. Oder beim letzten Mal hatten wir so ein Rollenspiel, das hat mich dann auch im Nachhinein noch/ Das hab ich am nächsten Tag dann auch umgesetzt. Da ging es darum, dass jemand, der mit mir als Schulleiter ein schlechtes Verhältnis hat, weil er mit einer Entscheidung nicht einverstanden ist, der also in seinem Kern irgendwie gekränkt war und zu sagen: Wie kommt man aus so einer gestörten Beziehung wieder raus? So. Und das ging/ Da war dabei eben auch offensichtlich, dass ich eben als Schulleiter auch eine Entscheidung treffen muss, die nicht unbedingt günstig ist für diese Person. Aber dennoch kann man versuchen, einen Faden wieder zu dem hinzubekommen zu/ Das hat Helle ganz gut gemacht, dass man sich da nicht rechtfertigt, sondern dass man vor allen Dingen achtzig Prozent reden lässt. Und so ging mir das, als ich die Entscheidung gesagt hab. Und beschreib nochmal und das öffnet die Leute dann schonmal mehr dann. Ohne, dass man ihnen dann sagt: Ich nehme meine |

| | | Entscheidung zurück. Wir machen alles anders. Sondern einfach nur dieses Zuhören. Also das waren gute Hinweise fand ich. (Leader_C_2, Pos. 18) |

B. Thematic analysis: Code Table

Theme	Code	Example
Seeing habits fail: 'I do not get into contact with this child'	Reactivity diminishes attunement	It is simply this [..] tension, you really feel it. Everything is somehow contracting [..] the voice is a bit louder. One is faster [..] does not have the strength, or the ease, or the time, to really observe: 'How are the others doing?' Rather one is somehow in one's hamster wheel. [..] cannot see how individual children are getting a little desperate and one doesn't really notice it [..] this does not feel good. [..] I do not live up to [..] my expectations of how I would like to be as a pedagogue. (Rolf)
	Confronting and becoming aware of own shortcomings	Jetzt in diesen letzten Seminaren, die wir hatten, ist mir das dann aufgefallen. Also das ist/ da ist es mir bewusst geworden, komischerweise. Warum auch immer. […] da ist mir aufgefallen wie ich mit ihm rede, wenn er es zeigt. Also da ist mir aufgefallen, dass es echt ungünstig ist, was ich da sage. Weil er eigentlich jeden morgen hört oder jeden Tag hört: Kevin das was du jetzt machst stört hier total. Und wenn du das jeden Tag hörst, dass das hier jetzt gerade ja überhaupt nicht so gewollt, dann ist das eben nicht schön. (Maria)
Situational affordance inviting change: 'Do it differently'	Situation affords being dealt with in a new way	S1: (…) (…) Ich sehe ein Kind, was (…) genau das nicht tut, was es tun soll. Nämlich irgendwie am Platz erst einmal bleiben. Sondern durch den Raum strakst, während ich am Arbeitsblätter verteilen bin. Weil das durfte halt kein Kind mehr machen, ne? Ähm/ und das schon wieder auf die Richtung Tafel klettert und in mir steigt schon wieder der Alarmpegel äh/ innerlich: Oh nein, jetzt geht das wieder los. Diese all zu bekannte Konfrontation zwischen uns ähm/ […] Alle anderen// alle Anderen sind ja momentan lernwillig (lacht)/ lernbereit, sagen wir es mal so. Ähm/ und mir ist klar: Okay, ich muss jetzt reagieren, auf irgendeine Art und Weise. Und eben nicht/ ich versuche jetzt nicht das, was ich vorher versucht habe, sondern versuche etwas Anderes. Da bin ich natürlich total aufgeregt. Weil normalerweise versuche ich dann eben/ '"We have spoken about this [in the EMS module]. Now look where you can go." […] back there [pointing with her hands behind her head] was EMS, and there [pointing in front of her] was the child. "And what do I do with it now? How do I bring this together? How can I use the chance that I have?" [..] then I thought: "see what your possibilities are." It was really about: "Do it differently than you usually do."' (Franziska)

	Increased agency	'Now I test it out' 'I will do it differently'
Suspending habit, enabling new pathways: 'A break between stimulus and response'	Capacity to suspend habitual tendencies	'Usually, one is caught in one's affect and [..] too much in this reacting, reacting, reacting. And in this case, it was like: Bup. Stimulus. Okay, he [the student] is there. Now I walk towards him, right? Well, this stop between stimulus and response.' (Julia)
	De-identifying from internalized habitus	'There is again my [inner] teacher, who is always telling me: "Well, this has to function now," but the children do not function that way. Well, the letting go of this. Instead, so-to-say, letting [the student] lead. When is he capable of which step. And I simply move along.' (Linda)
	Slowing down	Und mit dem Wissen auch, dass ich es jetzt mal anders probiere. Da muss ich mich ja erst einmal gedanklich sammeln. Und das hat ja auch meine ganze Reaktionszeit verlängert, was aber gut ist für mich, ne? Dieses: Okay, einatmen, ausatmen. L: Also du hast dir irgendwie einen Moment genommen, um diese Reaktion und diesen Reiz sozusagen/ das was es in dir auslöst erst einmal nicht das Übliche zu tun. Ist das so? S1: Mh hm (zustimmend). Mh hm (zustimmend). Na und eine Pause einzulegen zwischen dem, was da passiert und dann, was ich mache. L: Wie hast du das gemacht? Oder wie/ wie/ wodurch ist diese Pause gekommen? S1: Die Pause war durch dieses Sehen und denken: Mh hm, okay. Lass ihn erst einmal da vorne. Ich habe ja gesehen/ ihm passiert jetzt erst einmal nichts. Ich habe weiter ausgeteilt. Erst einmal überhaupt/

		L: Das war die Pause? /Oder dieses/
		S1: Das war die Pause, mit dem langsam Hingehen zu ihm.
		[Position: 85 - 93] (Julia)
Letting students and parents appear as legitimate other: 'I had an image of him in my head and that got in the way'	Taking the pressure off, prioritizing relationship quality	S1: Hm. Hm. Hm. (…) Hm. Hm. (…) Da bin ich mir nicht ganz sicher/ weil es gibt ja Dinge, die auch einfach äh/ immer so wirken, so. Ähm/ (…) also äh/ (…) also, ich verbinde auf jeden Fall mit Empathie macht Schule ähm/ dass ich versuche, den Druck rauszunehmen. Da war (boy's name) jetzt ein schlechtes Beispiel (lacht). Dass ich äh/ sagen wir mal, ein bisschen öfter mal die Fünf gerade sein lasse (lacht). Äh/ ich meine ähm/ es ist ja jetzt nicht so, dass ich deswegen unab/ also, keine Wünsche, keine Ansprüche mehr hätte. Ähm/ (…) aber wenn die mit so einem hohen Druck verbunden sind, dann bringen sie weder mir etwas, noch dem Kind. So. Ähm/ und da merke ich, da habe ich bei Phil noch nicht den richtigen ähm/ (…) noch nicht so den Punkt gefunden, wo ich ähm/ ähm/ wo ich bei mir Druck rausnehme. (…) Na? Also/ [Jill; Position: 222 - 222]
	Labeling the students' feelings and supporting co- regulation	hab gesagt: Pass auf, ich merke grad, du kannst grad nicht. Stimmt es? Und er meinte er so: "Hm." Ich so: Brauchst du mal ne Pause? "Hmm." Also er hat auch gar nicht wirklich/ nur so formuliert und dann habe ich ihm diese Uhr gegeben und dann hat er/ hat er sich draußen hingesetzt und ich hab gesagt: Guck mal und wenn die Uhr durchgelaufen ist, - Das sind so ne Farben, die in so Blasen runterlaufen. - Und du dich dann gut fühlst, dann kommst du wieder rein. [Franziska; Position: 22 - 22]
	Taking the child's perspective	Also da noch mal in die Perspektive des Kindes zu gehen und noch mehr darauf zu gucken, was das Kind in dem Augenblick braucht. Das hat EmS mit mir gemacht. Das war glaube ich nach den ersten Sitzungen oder so. Also das hat EmS auf jeden Fall gemacht, dass sich dadurch der Blick aufs Kind auf jeden Fall noch mal verändert hat. Also, dass ich glaubte, dass ich schon sehr individuell arbeite, aber ich in dem

		Augenblick gemerkt habe, es ist nicht individuell genug, was ich hier tue, weil ich dachte, dass die äußeren Umstände schon sehr viel dafür tun, dass ich einzeln auf die Kinder eingehen kann, aber dann gemerkt habe: Nee, da musst du noch mehr, du musst noch MEHR da rein. Und ich hab ja hier die Möglichkeit; warum gehe ICH nicht mit ihm raus. [Franziska; Position: 26 - 26]
	Seeing the need that motivates behaviour	Sondern das ist so ein ähm/ (…) also der Blick darauf, dass es ja eigentlich ja ein besorgter Vater ist, der ist glaube ich deutlicher durch die Fortbildung. Ich glaube sonst hätte ich mich auch eher abschrecken lassen, von/ er schimpft und pöbelt gerade auf dem Flur herum und kriegt nicht, was er will. Äh/ es ist dann einfach präsenter. In dem Moment erlebt man einen Menschen, der sehr unfreundlich ist und denkt sich: Ach herrje, das ist mein Termin? Mit der/ der soll mir jetzt einen Förderantrag unterschreiben (lacht)? Das klappt ja im Leben nicht. So. Da regt er sich gerade auf und jetzt soll er mit seinem Sohn noch zum Psychiater gehen. Das ist keine gute Grundlage //(lacht), so. […] nein, ich glaube das hätte ich nicht so gut gelöst, hätte ich (…) das nicht gerade so/ es waren ja jetzt die letzten Module auch ziemlich dicht zusammen. Dadurch waren es noch einmal/ ja/ in der konzentrierten Form einfach viel präsenter. [Hanna; Position: 501 - 507]
	Labelling students negatively creates self-fulfilling prophecy	Aber ich habe den Eindruck, dass es nicht mehr dieses Zerren annimmt, wie vorher. Also es hatte sich für mich schon so verfestigt, so ein Stück. Ich habe wirklich schon so eben ein fertiges Bild im Kopf gehabt. So ist der Junge. Jeden Tag. Und so werde ich den jetzt auch gleich erleben. Und das/ das hat sich natürlich fast immer bestätigt, ne? Weil ich natürlich so schon auf das Kind geguckt habe. [Linda; Position: 197 - 197]
Compassion and care for self as base for meeting others:	Participating in the EMS modules in a way that allows them to be transformed	Ähm/ genau und was inhaltlich die Module angeht, war man eigentlich/ war ich eigentlich jedes Mal aufs Neue überrascht, was es äh/ in sich hatte. Man hat ja/ geht ja mit so einer gewissen Erwartungshaltung an ein Thema heran. Dann sieht man ähm/

| 'Mercy with myself' | | die Folien und denkt so: Aha, ja, ja. Darum geht es. Mh hm. Guckt man sich so ein bisschen durch. Und letztendlich hat das aus meiner Sicht immer einen besonderen Dreh bekommen. Immer einen, den ich nicht erwartet habe. Und spezieller immer Tag zwei, war so ein schräger Tag. Also von Montag bis Dienstag bis Mittwoch war ich immer. Montag war so gefühlt so ein bisschen einstimmen, ankommen und: Ach ja, da bin ich wieder und hui, jetzt bin ich aber gespannt. Und man hat/ das klingt ein bisschen komisch, wenn ich das sage/ ich habe immer das Gefühl gehabt, bis auf ein Modul: Ach, da kann mir nichts passieren, bei dem Thema. Also ich fühle mich innerlich ähm/ natürlich äh/ passt das Thema zu meinem Job. Aber ich fühle mich nicht sofort herausgefordert von dem Thema. Und war aber neugierig. Und Tag zwei gab/ gab es immer eine Herausforderung. So eine persönliche Herausforderung. Durch dieses (…) dialogische. Durch diese persönliche Sprache, wo man so dachte: Ach, meine Güte, wie/ also wirklich/ wie anstrengend auch, dass immer wieder unter diesen neuen Blickwinkel, unter, ne? Also Paradigmenwechsel mitgedacht, ne? Da/ und das zu integrieren. Und dann war/ dann ist man ganz verunsichert, oder ich. Ganz verunsichert in Tag drei reingegangen. So richtig: Ah, oh Gott. Hoffentlich bringt das ein bisschen/ wieder Ruhe in einen (selbst). Weil so viel wund war. Ja. Also so aufgerissen und äh/ umgekehrte Fragen plötzlich. Und man ist nach Hause gekommen und hatte den Kopf voll. Ähm/ ja und am Mittwoch war es dann oft so, dass man erst einmal wieder durch/ natürlich durch die Körperübungen auch wieder/ erst einmal wieder zur Ruhe kam und dann auch mitgekriegt hat: Okay, (…) wir machen es ganz langsam, ja? Also es hat sich dann im Körper abgelegt und da war es ja leider Gottes schon wieder vorbei. Also ja. Leider Gottes

[Julia; Position: 33 - 33] |
| | From perfectionism to self-compassion | Na, das war also dieses, dieses Hineinfühlen und dieses/ Die drei Tage, die wir hatten, um ähm/ um einfach nur mal auf uns zu gucken und zu gucken, was uns gut tut. Das hat bei mir diese Sperre so ein bisschen aufgemacht, dass es alles immer perfekt sein muss. Also das hat bei mir hat halt auch so/ Also bei mir hat es in erster Linie ja sowieso erst mal privat gewirkt. Also dieses, dieses/ dieser wahnsinnige Anspruch, den ich an mich |

		selbst auch zu Hause habe. Ich habe drei Kinder, ich bin alleinerziehend, da ist der Puma, der ist so da oben irgendwie. Und da einfach mir gegenüber gnädig zu sein und mir Sachen gut tut. Und mir Sachen/ Ich habe dann angefangen Yoga zu machen und nach dem ersten Block, also das mache ich jetzt nicht mehr so regelmäßig wie danach. Also direkt danach. Aber die zwei Monate danach, da habe ich wirklich, da habe ich ganz viel versucht, bei mir zu sein und ganz viel zu fühlen. Was brauche ich? Und das hat mir, also privat und damit natürlich auch beruflich ganz viel gebracht. Und deswegen sage ich: dieses Gnädig-Sein. Hätte ich vorher in der Art und Weise glaube ich nicht erkannt. Und ich/ Ich weiß ja, dass (names of facilitators) immer sagen: Ja, wir wissen, dass es ganz viel wirkt. Aber ich weiß gar nicht, ob die wissen/ Natürlich ist es nicht bei allen Kollegen so. Aber was das alles AUSLÖSEN kann. Das ist tatsächlich so. [Franziska; Position: 42 - 43]
	Surprise at being allowed to focus on self	Ähm/ einmal zu/ zu erfahren, dass es okay ist, wenn ich auf mich gucke. Ähm/ und mich in dieser Beziehung zu erleben. Zu Kindern vor allen Dingen natürlich. (räuspert) Auch zu Eltern, zu Kollegen, aber besonders natürlich zu Kindern. Äh/ und auch eben diesen Fokus auf mich legen zu dürfen. Das hatte ich so bisher noch gar nicht so den/ das war noch nicht so in meinem Bewusstsein irgendwie. Man sieht immer die/ man muss sich um die Kinder kümmern. Man muss sich darum kümmern. Aber, dass man selber mehr Teil dieser Beziehung ist. Das/ das ist mir sehr deutlich geworden dadurch. Und äh/ es hat Tatsache für mich ganz schön viel verändert. [Linda; Position: 11 - 11]
	Realizing that own inner condition affected the quality of their relationships	zumindest war mir in dem Moment total bewusst, dass ich jetzt irgendetwas machen muss, um meinen Stress zu reduzieren, so. [Hanna; Position: 138 - 138]
Shaping relationships: 'Taking responsibility'	'Owning' and expressing needs and feelings, by speaking about themselves	Nein. Genau. Nein. Und dann/ und dann// bin ich jetzt in dem Fall/ habe ich dann bloß gesagt: So, du merkst ja/ ich versuche hier gerade Ruhe reinzukriegen. Ich kann das/ ich kann das so nicht. Ich brauche von dir jetzt einfach Ruhe. Und dann guckt mich das Kind

| | | und meint: Aha! Und es setzt sich hin und ist ruhig. Ich dachte: Okay. […] Ich/ also ich habe nicht das bei ihm gelassen/ also sondern wirklich die Verantwortung, ne? Diese Qualität in einer Beziehung, dass ich nicht das Kind dafür verantwortlich mache und auch nicht in diese/ das haben wir alle an uns.

[Julia; Position: 48 - 48]

genau und ähm/ bevor ich diese/ diese/ dieses Gespräch hatte, mit (EMS facilitator), habe ich halt gesagt: Hör auf damit! Na? So. Aber es hilft nichts. Und mittlerweile bin ich/ also gehe ich von ihm weg, sondern sage: Mich stört das. (…) Jetzt stört es mich. So. Kannst du jetzt damit aufhören? Also äh/ und äh/ ich habe den Eindruck, dass er das besser akzeptieren kann, weil ich von mir rede. Also ich rede/ ich/ ich/ ich äh/ unterbreche ihn/ Tatsache/ auch erst eigentlich dann, wenn es mich wirklich so sehr stört. Ähm/ und das/ also eine Weile kann ich es tolerieren, weil ich weiß, er ist so. Ich kann ihn nicht ändern. Ich kriege das/ also, ne? Ich bin kein Verhaltenstherapeut ähm/ und bleibe jetzt/ versuche jetzt bei mir zu bleiben. Und zu gucken: Wie lange halte ich es jetzt noch aus?

[Linda; Position: 102 - 102] |
| | Fostering coherence between self and other | S1: Ähm/ und wo/ wo ich dann irgendwie/ ja und dann habe ich gesagt: Es ist doch jetzt/ es ist doch jetzt echt so richtig doof, ne? Also, dieses/ dieses "Wir haben beide nichts bekommen, von dem was wir eigentlich wollten" (lacht). Irgendwie/ das macht doch keinen Sinn. Das sollten wir irgendwie nicht so fortsetzen. Das macht irgendwie ähm/ äh/ keinen Sinn und dann habe ich/ habe ich gesagt: Okay, also wenn äh/ wenn jetzt/ es gibt ja bestimmte Fußballspiele, die sind eben dann ganz besonders wichtig. Ähm/ (…) aber du merkst ja auch, dass ich möchte, dass du was lernst. Und dass das jetzt nicht irgendwie (lacht)/ ähm/ dass ich da echtes Interesse daran habe und dass es äh/ dass es äh/ und dass er, wenn es wirklich etwas ganz Wichtiges ist. Dass wir vielleicht ein Kompromiss finden können. Dass es bestimmte Situationen gibt, in denen ich ihm dann sage: Okay, heute ist das wichtiger. Und dann kriegen wir aber ein |

		andermal eine Lernsituation wieder hin. […]
		L: Okay. Und was/ wie/ wie hat er/ was hast du von ihm dann gehört oder mitgekriegt?
		S1: Ähm/ er hat dann irgendwie genickt. Er war irgendwie noch nicht glücklich oder so, ne? (lacht) Aber okay. Okay. Gut. Das probieren wir einmal so. Nach dem Motto.
		L: Mh hm. So/ so auf die Art, hast du ihn/ hast du ihn gelesen da. Ja.
		[Jill; Position: 115 - 120]
	Shifting basic assumptions about professionalism	Mein Blick hat sich verändert. Erstens auf meinen/ auf meine äh/ auf meinen Beruf. Was meine Aufgaben sind. Ähm/ also die Aufgaben an sich, habe ich natürlich nicht verändert, aber/Aber ähm/ ähm/ es hat sich mein Blick verändert, sodass ich nicht den Auftrag habe, das Kind zu verändern. Sondern ähm/ ähm/ ja eben auf die/ meine Beziehung zu dem Kind zu gucken, dass ich versuche die zu/ zu stabilisieren, sodass ich über die Beziehung dieses Kind besser erreichen kann. Und dadurch bei ihm dann, von sich aus, eine Veränderung erscheint, oder eintritt.

[Linda; Position: 151 - 155] |
| Seeing something you like in the child and feeling something you like in yourself: 'Like a bunch of flowers' | Gratifying moments of change | S1: Und danach war es wie ein Segen. Das war wirklich/ ah Blumenwiese.

[Julia; Position: 71 - 71] |
| | Improved interactions with parents | Dann fühlte er sich gesehen, mit seiner Empfindlichkeit und überhaupt auch in seiner Meinung. Was er von Masken hält. Und. Und. Und. Und. Ne? Und auf einmal meinte er: Ach, das geht schon. Und das GANZE Elterngespräch mit ihm/ und er ist wirklich eine/ ein schwieriger Charakter, was äh/ Gespräche mit ihm angeht. Er war zahm wie ein Hase. Im ganzen Gespräch. Hat seine Frau zu Wort kommen lassen. Was er sonst auch nie tut. Er war gesehen worden, mit seiner (klatscht) MASKE/ mit seinem |

		Maskenproblem und seinem Widerwillen, aber okay. Ja. Das war auch SEHR interessant. L: Mh hm. Mh hm. Also normalerweise? Wie wäre das normalerweise dann abgelaufen? S1: Na, normaler/ na, normalerweise/ wir haben BEIDE gedacht/ danach haben wir/ ja überlegt, was das/ dass das/ es war uns beiden klar: Diese eine Sache vom Anfang, hat die ganze Gesprächsatmosphäre (atmet scharf aus) zu einem Blumenstrauß gemacht. […] Ja, es war dann/ es wurde ganz viel/ sehr persönlich. Ähm/ also deutlich persönlicher. Eben wie gesagt, die Mutter hat sich GANZ stark eingebracht. Und/ und der Vater war/ hat dann auch etwas Gutes. Normalerweise zählt er immer bloß das Kritische auf, ne? Hat dann auch etwas Gutes über äh/ sein Kind äh/ auch beizutragen gehabt. Und über die Schule. Und ja eigentlich auch über uns Lehrer. Also, ne? Das/ auf einmal war dieser/ war es bunt, ja? [Julia; Position: 128 - 136]
	Feeling a positive affective connection with students	S1: Das war total stimmig. Weil das ist so aufgegangen. Das war so/ Das ist ja das, was bei anderen Fortbildungen fehlt. Das ist so, ich erlebe etwas in der Fortbildung und das ist alles rosa Theorie und so und ich habe es einfach gefühlt und ich habe es erlebt und es hatte einen Erfolg und es hat noch mehr Beziehung gemacht und es ist wirklich sehr schwierig, in eine intensive Beziehung zu gehen, wenn du die Kinder nur einmal in der Woche hast. Ja, das war halt Förderunterricht und wenn du da ein Kind hast, was nicht so reagiert wie andere Kinder. Und wenn du dann etwas tust, was funktioniert, anscheinend dem Kind gut tut. Der ist dann halt reingekommen und hat dann was getan und war dann im Unterricht dabei. Und ich habe das Gefühl gehabt, es hat halt über Wochen geholfen. Also wir waren einfach dann so/ Ich habe den gesehen und ich habe mich jedes Mal gefreut, wenn ich ihn gesehen habe. Ich habe ihn/ Ich freu mich ja sonst auch, wenn ich die Kinder sehe. Aber wir hatten/ haben eine andere Verbindung gehabt. Ja, das hat jetzt/

		[Franziska; Position: 83 - 85]
	Relational self-efficacy	S1: Und in der Situation denke ich: Das ist wirklich etwas, wo ich/ also wirklich ganz entspannt, diesen aggressiven Menschen übernommen habe und mich sicher fühlte. Ich setze mich mit dem jetzt gemütlich hin und das kriegen wir hin. S1: Und das ist glaube ich schon/ ja ein ganz großer Schritt, so einen aggressiven Vater entspannt mitzunehmen, sage ich mal. Sonst war es immer so: Hua, was jetzt (lacht)? L: Ja. Mit/ weniger entspannt? S1: Ja. Auf jeden Fall. [Hanna; Position: 509 - 517]

Meso-level field shifts

School (Example)	Code	Quote
1: "It cost us a lot of sweat to find togetherness"	Pre-training: Contagious negative affect and cynicism	Und wir merken gerade, dass dieser Punkt/ Also nicht kippt, aber dass/ wir haben vorhin gesagt, wir haben gedacht, die Masern seien ausgerottet. […] Aber sie SIND gar nicht ausgerottet. An ein paar Stellen bricht jetzt hier und da wieder was auf. Das haben wir vorhin völlig verschreckt festgestellt. Dass gerade so Verhaltensweisen aufbrechen, von denen wir dachten: Och ey, was hat uns das Schweiß und was nicht alles gekostet, um bestimmte Kultur und ein Miteinander zu finden und wie/ so ein bisschen wie bei der Erziehung bei Kindern, wo man denkt, also jetzt hat man einen Entwicklungsschritt gemacht und als wenn einem dieser Entwicklungsschritt Angst macht, holt man den Bock nochmal raus. (Leader_B_1, Pos. 76-78)

S1: Also, ich glaube, ähm, für mich war immer das ich den An/ am Anfang den Eindruck hatte, vor sieben-acht Jahren, dass mir keiner glaubt. Und zwar nicht, weil sie mich doof finden oder ich so, weiß ich nicht. Sondern, das nicht gewöhnt sind. Oder/ Das braucht ja auch Zeit, bis man jemandem glauben kann und sich an jemanden so gewöhnt und auch merkt, dass man also nicht nur dann ernsthaft ist, wenn man immer nur ganz ernst rüberkommt. Ich glaube, man musste damit erst umgehen lernen. Das Kollegium hat sich verändert. Und das heißt, wir sind insgesamt schon an einem Punkt, wo ich glaube ein Vertrauen da ist. (Leader_B_1, Pos. 74) |
| | Shift from affect contagion to embodied presence | Also dadurch, dass ich merke, dass sich in der Beziehung was verändert, dass wenn ich mehr auf mich gucke, dass sich dann die Qualität der Beziehung einfach verändert. Und das hat halt nicht nur was hier in der Schule mit den Kindern zu tun, das hat was mit meinen Kollegen zu tun. Ich kann da teilweise wirklich, wenn ich dann mal durchatme. (atmet hörbar) Es wird nicht alles so heiß gegessen, wie es gekocht wird (Franziska, Pos. 150) |

		S3: Die Verhaltensweise der Kollegin ist nicht nochmal aufgetaucht. Es gab durchaus Situationen, wo es nochmal zu Konflikten hinterher kam und da war die/ die, ich will sagen, die Angst vor der Person, also dieser Moment, so überrumpelt zu werden, das passiert schon noch mit der Person und die ist aber nicht mehr da. Aber die Überrumplung findet nicht mehr statt. Also ich hatte dann ja gerade neulich gab es einen Moment mit genau dieser Kollegin, wo ich wahrgenommen habe, jetzt kommt dieses, ich tauche ganz plötzlich auf und stelle mich vor vollendete Tatsachen mit meinem Wesen, was ich so habe und das hat mich nicht dazu gebracht, irritiert sozusagen nur noch spontan zu reagieren. Sondern ich konnte auch runterfahren, konnte mich da irgendwo auch besinnen auf das, was mir wichtig war und hab das zurückgeben können. Also hab mich davon nicht beeinflussen lassen. (Leader_B_3, Pos. 35) L: Und wie nehmt ihr das dann im Kontakt direkt wahr? Also dass die sich zurückziehen und nicht so öffnen oder? S3: Nee. Die sind schon geerdet. S2: Die sind engagiert in diesem Bereich. Die interessiert, dass es in der Schule weitergetragen wird. Die bezeichnen das als wertvoll. S3: Nicht so schnelles Reagieren. Nicht sofort auf alles. Erstmal sacken lassen. (Leader_B_3, Pos. 23-24)
	Shift from cynicism to compassion (and self-care)	S1: (…) (…) Also es ist schwer. Ich hatte auf jeden Fall ein (…)/ bei einem äh/ bei einem Modul äh/ mit einer Kollegin von mir ein Gespräch geführt (…) und das war dieses zehn Minuten reden. (…) Zehn Minuten äh/ zuhören, ne? Das könnte/ (…) (…) und das war ganz schön krass, weil die (…) Kollegin bei den zehn Minuten reden äh/ (…) ein bisschen weggeknickt ist. Wenn man das so sagen kann. Also sie hatte wirklich äh/ ein hartes Thema irgendwie. Und dann echt/ also sehr persönlich war es dann so. Und ich glaube sie wollte, das hat sich auch gesagt. Sie dachte/ es geht ihr gar nicht mehr so nah und es ging ihr sehr nah und sie hat dann echt so geweint und äh/ also es war wirklich ganz schön intensiv. Und dann hat man erst mal so ein bisschen gebraucht und ich konnte auch gar nicht gleich/ glaube wir haben das dann auch gelassen, die den anderen zehn

Minuten, weil/ dass ich dann zehn Minuten rede/ weil ich glaube das war dann gar nicht mehr so richtig möglich. So wir haben das //nochmal ganz kurz// L: Also da kam so //etwas Intensives bei ihr hoch //und dann seid ihr/ S1. Genau, genau, genau.// L: Ja. Ja. S1: Und äh (…)/ ja und das hat schon etwas gemacht. Also erstmal natürlich auch gegenüber der Kollegin //irgendwie, ne? L: Ja.// Was hat das gemacht, gegenüber der Kollegin? S1: Also für uns war das schon klar irgendwie, also sie/ sie hat ja auch darum gebeten, irgendwie, (lacht)/ dass man/ sie meinte: Puh, das ist mir aber jetzt auch unangenehm und so. L: Ja. S1: Und ich meinte: Das muss dir jetzt doch nicht unangenehm sein und äh/ sie meinte dann so: Ja, mein Gott/ und dass/ ich will ja nicht, dass jeder das so mitkriegt. Ich so: Ja, das ist mir schon klar, ich habe dir ja auch nur zugehört. Also ich will auch nicht darüber jetzt/ mit hausieren gehen und so, ne? Also/ und da kommt man dann auf ein anderes Vertrauensding, finde ich. Das hat das dann gemacht. Beziehungsweise was es auch noch gemacht hat ist natürlich äh/ was klar ist, dass (…) jeder Kollege eigentlich wahrscheinlich so etwas hat und in jedem das drinsteckt, irgendwie. Und, dass man da einfach auch bestimmte Sachen auch sensibler angeht, so. Und eine Schule äh/ ist ja unter Kollegen, sage ich mal, (…) oft ein (…)/ auch so ein bisschen derber (…) Galgenhumor. Gerade wenn so ein Notstand ist und so, ne? Dann (…) haut man mal schnell so einen Spruch raus, irgendwie und ich glaube, dass ich damit versuche vorsichtiger zu werden, oder genauer zu gucken, wann das wirklich/ es gibt Situationen, da muss man den gegenüber auch mal äh/ tatsächlich auch mal so kurz (…) abchecken irgendwie, bevor/ also, oder man muss/ also bestimmt auf so/ so Stimmungen und Schwingungen so achten, weil (…) es kann ganz einfach sein, dass der Kollege das normalerweise wegsteckt, wie nichts, ja? Irgendwie/ oder man macht so etwas irgendwie. Man ist das gewohnt irgendwie: Naja! So. Und geht da so darüber und (…)/ und mit einem Mal haut es den Kollegen aber um, ja? Und äh/ und du weißt gar nicht was los war eigentlich. Ähm, da habe ich doch nichts gemacht und so, ne? Also ich finde, dass man da/ ich finde, dass man auch im Ton untereinander/ oder ich versuche da ein bisschen mehr darauf zu achten, dass man da wirklich auch (…) ein bisschen genauer zuhört einfach. Ein bisschen/ auch mal/ nicht nur zuhört, sondern einfach nur mal guckt und auch nonverbale Sprache auch mal liest, irgendwie. Ich finde das hat das eigentlich so gemacht. (Rolf, Pos. 101-110)

S1: Wenn man das nicht so mit Begegnungen jetzt benennen kann, dann kann ich ja bei mir

		bleiben. Also es ist schon so, dass ich das bewusster wahrmache. Also auf mich achte. Ich weiß jetzt nicht, aus welchen Gründen, aber tatsächlich so, dass ich sehr wohl gucke/ Also ich merke, wenn ich in bestimmte Situationen komme und ich sehe, das geht jetzt in richtung Überforderung. Dann kann ich schon bewusst einen Schritt zurück/ oder MUSS ich vielleicht auch, aber ich geh da tatsächlich auch bewusst einen Schritt zurück. Atme erstmal (lacht). Nee, jetzt musst du erstmal langsam machen. (Leader_B_3, Pos. 28)
3) "we are well on our way in this change process"	Pre-training: Appreciative atmosphere	SL: Ja, ein Hauptpunkt ist immer, immer, dass wir versuchen, ne gute Kommunikation hinzubekommen, sowohl mit den Kollegen, als auch mit den Eltern...als auch mit den Kindern, als auch mit unserem Büro...das ist eigentlich n Schwerpunkt unserer Arbeit und das...und vor allem, dass wir miteinander versuchen zu reden...dass wir miteinander sprechen, dass versuchen wir sowohl strukturell irgendwie hinzubekommen, indem wir viele Gesprächszeiten ermöglichen, als auch inhaltlich (lachend) irgendwie gut hinzubekommen, ähm, dass wir die Gespräche so führen...hoffen wir...ja.[...] dass eine ...wertschätzende Atmosphäre...eine gute Atmosphäre dabei ist... (Leader_A_1, Pos. 46-51) S1 (post-interview): Also jeder der hier arbeitet, arbeitet vor allen Dingen hier, weil das Kollegium so toll ist. Das ist so das/ der große Konsens, den jeder mehr oder minder trägt. Aber das stimmt schon. Es ist wirklich ein angenehmes Kollegium äh/ was viele Herausforderungen zusammen besteht. (Julia, Pos. 390)
	Tendency to avoid conflicts	SL: ...ein Konflikt ist, ... (überlegt)..vielleicht manchmal...nicht früh genug und nicht klar genug ins Gespräch zu gehen. Und die Erwartungen... ... zu ... zu benennen. Klar zu benennen (Leader_A_1, Pos. 404-407) A (co-leader): Ich weiß es nicht, ob`s immer gelingt `ne gute Perspektive einzunehmen, also von meiner Seite aus, was die Kollegen betrifft sowohl, was die Erwartungen betrifft, als auch ... was ... mmmh... als auch, was ihr ... ihre Kommunikation untereinander betrifft, ob des gut wahrgenommen wird...und ihre Arbeitsbedingungen. Also, ob des wirklich immer gelingt, ob die Kommunikation untereinander gut is...und ähm...ob die... ob die Bedingungen gut eingeschätzt werden, die Erwartungen zu hoch sind oder zu niedrig, und ob wir das richtig und gut einschätzen. Ob wir da gut, ...also ICH! da genug auf die Menschen eingehe...? Also diesen Blick

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		genug habe, auf die andere Seite zu gucken oder zu sehr von meiner Seite aus zu schauen und alles rosarot zu schauen was gar nicht rosa-rot is, zum Beispiel, ne?
		SL: mhm
		A: zu denken: Whaa, is alles ...schön...und unter Umständen is es gar nicht so, wie man`s denkt (Leader_A_1, Pos. 413-435)
		SL: "So reden wir an dieser Schule nicht!" (lacht)
		[co-leader]: (lachend) Ja!
		Beide lachen
		SL: "s is unser Lieblingssatz." (Leader_A_1, Pos. 129-132)
	Pattern "shaken up"	S2: Also es ist ein großartiges Programm. Und es hat so viele Facetten. Vielleicht ist es das? Das dieses Wort Beziehung in Schule nochmal doll neu definiert hat. Aber die ist noch nicht/ Die Definition ist noch nicht neu geschrieben jetzt bei mir. Ja. Ok. (Leader_A_3, Pos. 425)
		S1: Ein lebendiges, tolles Kollegium ist der Hauptsatz. IMMER, wenn wir Bewerber hier haben, sagen wir, wir haben ein tolles Kollegium hier und das stimmt auch.
		S2: Es ist normalerweise voll engagiert und hat auch Lust, etwas zu verändern. Und jetzt war es eher, ja, nicht mürrisch. Sondern/ es schwer zu sagen. Also ich bin noch bei diesem, wie waren sie? Und wie war die Beziehung? Weil das finde ich total spannend, weil ich das total spannend finde. Sie waren frustriert, nein. Sie waren/
		S1: Na, auch ein Stück aggressiv.
		S2: Sie waren aggressiv. Auch so ein bisschen depressiv. Also es ist wirklich schwer zu sagen. Es

		war eine Mischung aus so vielem. (Leader_A_3, Pos. 217-220)
		S1: Ja, ja. Ganz klar. Das ist im Moment sogar ein bisschen unser Thema. Die Beobachtung geht so ein bisschen dahin, dass/ [co-leader] hat das die Tage schon schön gesagt mit Helles Buch: Die Kollegen sind sehr bei sich. Und der Blick auf das Andere, den vermissen wir im Moment ein BISSCHEN. Der ist/ Es ist stärker gerichtet auf die eigene Person und so dieses/ ja, hellwach/ S2: Hellwach fehlt. S1: Das Hellwach, hat [co-leader] richtig gut gesagt. Ja, das Hellwach fehlt. Wie geht es den Anderen und wie geht es meinem Team und wie kommen wir gut zusammen, wie leben wir gut miteinander. Das ist vielleicht auch unsere Wahrnehmung, aber so empfinde ich es im Moment ein bisschen. (Leader_A_3, Pos. 100-102) S2: Ja. Und auch/ Ja. Ja. // Ja, und auch UNS gegenüber. Auch wir haben es uns/ Wir haben es auch für uns/ Also ICH hab es auch für mich empfunden, sag ich mal. Also ich hab auch gedacht: Oah nee. So sprechen wir einfach nicht miteinander. Und auch nicht mit mir, ne? Also ich hab auch mich. Ich finde es nicht schön, wenn so mit mir gesprochen wird. Das war das Eine, was anders war. Und das Andere war, dass wir so sprechen. Also dass wir jetzt dann zurück so sprechen. Ne? Das war das Andere. Unsere Bitte war zu kommen, was steckt eigentlich dahinter, im Moment/ (Leader_A_3, Pos. 176)
	Shift from Homogeneity to Integration	S1: [context after EMS supervision on a conflict among faculty]: Ja. // Und ich hatte auch das Gefühl, es ist TRAGfähig. Also ich hatte nicht Sorge Ohhh, was passiert jetzt wieder? Sondern ich hatte wirklich das Gefühl, das ist auch tragfähig. L: Was ist tragfähig? S1: Die, die Beziehung dann wieder zu der Person.

		L: Ja. Und das zeigt sich tragfähig/ Das heißt dann kann was passieren, wenn das tragfähig/
		(…) (…) (…)
		S1: Wir haben ja in der Sitzung auch gut benennen können, was das ist und wie es uns damit gegangen ist. Und es ist ja/ ich glaub, das ist ein Weg, der sich hier jetzt auch ein bisschen einspielt jetzt. Zwischen Ganztagsleitung und uns/ so ein bisschen. Das meine ich mit tragfähig. Dass wir es vielleicht besser benennen können.
		L: Ah besser benennen können. Ok. Also, was könnt ihr besser benennen?
		S1: Wenn etwas in Schieflage gerät. Dass wir erst gar nicht // an diesen (klatscht in die Hände) kommen. (Leader_A_3, Pos. 326-333)
		S1: Ja. Und eigentlich dachten Alle/ VIELE – natürlich denken nicht alle so – dass es ein großer Einheitsbrei ist. Wir alle/ also das kriegt man so in der Gesamtkonferenz mit. Dann glauben immer alle für alle sprechen zu können. Die sprechen ja nicht von sich. Die sprechen immer gleich für ALLE mit. (Julia, Pos. 444)
4) "Constantly under attack"	Pre-training: Blaming and defending	S1: weil wir … wir haben gerade sozusagen attestiert bekommen, Ähm, von der Schulinspektion eine ganz schlechte Wahrnehmung, So im Sinne von: Da war das einer der Kritikpunkte, dass es keine wertschätzende Kommunikation unter den Akteuren gibt. ähm… das wird mir auch immer mal wieder von paar Kollegen berichtet, die vielleicht nicht in der, in der Mitarbeiter Hierarchie ein bisschen untenan sind, vermeintlich, dass sie, dass so das Verhältnis zwischen Lehrkräften, Erzieherinnen, Erziehern und Sozialarbeitern oft auch geprägt ist, von einem missgünstigen Miteinander oder auch…
		L: Also zwischen den Gruppen?
		S1: Zwischen den Gruppen. Gehässigem Reden übereinander, dem jeweiligen unterstellen, der

		jeweils andere Akteur arbeitet nicht genug. Mir gegenüber, sind eigentlich immer alle freundlich. Aber das liegt vielleicht auch natürlich in der Funktion des Schulleiters. Also insofern, weil man ja eine Art Vorgesetzter da ist, dann auch. Ähmm. Ich empfinde, kann das nicht empfinden, in, in, in der direkten Interaktion mit mir sind immer alle sehr freundlich. Manchmal im Bereich des Emailverkehrs. Es gibt schon ein paar Kollegen wo ich ein bißchen eine gewisse Enthemmung da sehe, da wo man eher vielleicht auch mal denkt: Da ist jemand unzufrieden oder so. Aber insgesamt geht es mir sowie [co-principal], dass ich eigentlich denke, dass es eigentlich hier bei aller Belastung, die doch sehr stark ist, eigentlich ein gutes Verhältnis ist, wie es sich ja oft so ergibt, wenn man `ne herausfordernde Situation hat, dass die reihen sich schließen sozusagen. (Leader_C_1, Pos. 16-22)
	Pattern persists, despite attempts to promote change	Aber ähm/ am meisten hat mich überzeugt, dass die Schulleitung das [EMS Training] auch durchlaufen muss. Und ich ja ganz viel Entwicklungsbedarf auf Schulleitungsebene sehe. (Hanna, Pos. 11) Und es ist sozusagen, ich/ die Schule äh/ an unserer Schule brennt es ja auch an/ an vielen Ecken und Kanten immer mal wieder. Und dann wird es mal wieder ein bisschen ruhiger. Aber gerade auch als wir das letzte Modul hatten, gab es auch wieder viele äh/ viele Irritationen, die die gesamte Schule betroffen haben. Schulleitung und so weiter. Dann hatten wir ja auch viele/ haben eine Reihe von Kollegen Belastungsanzeigen gestellt. Ähm/ und dann gab es sozusagen auch ähm/ viel Missmut über bestimmte Entscheidungen, die innerhalb der Schule getroffen wurden und ähm/ das war gerade sehr ähm/ präsent auch. Als wir die letzten/ als die letzten zwei Module stattgefunden haben. Wo ich zum Beispiel auch etwas über die Schule erfahren habe, deren Empathie macht Schule hatte überhaupt nichts mit Empathie macht Schule zu tun. Ähm/ äh/ aber wo ich die äh/ auch sehr geschluckt habe: Oh Gott, wo geht das jetzt wieder hin? Also, das nimmt einen ja dann auch immer wieder äh/ na, hatte ich das Gefühl: Na super, Empathie macht Schule. Eigentlich will ich ja Empathie macht Schule machen und jetzt ist mein Gehirn von ganz anderen Sachen äh/ wird es belegt, ne? Na? Das fand ich tatsächlich äh/ ziemlich schwierig. (Jill, Pos. 42)
	Shift from Defending to Listening	Also auch/ In dem einen Fall war das so, aus dem einen Seminar ging ich dann auch selbst raus als Schulleiter; das ist gut, wenn du mal angegriffen wirst. In meiner Rolle wird man ja ständig angegriffen. Ob das jetzt Lehrkräfte selber sind, die ihren Unmut äußern. Oder Eltern. Schüler jetzt

| | | eigentlich nicht so, aber, sagen wir mal so, Eltern und Lehrer können ja auch sehr massiv reden. Ähm, dass ich dann merk, ich hab so eine Tendenz, wo ich denke, das gehört dazu, dass man das ERKLÄRT das eigene Handeln, so. Das ist vielleicht auch kognitiv nachvollziehbar, dass ich das sage, aber es hat dann schnell so einen Rechtfertigungscharakter. Und dann bist du eigentlich im Gespräch mit deinem Partner nicht unbedingt weiter, wenn du ihnen das zwar alles gut erklären kannst, aber du ihn trotzdem nicht emotional mitgenommen hast vielleicht. Und dann hat das immer so eine Verteidigungshaltung. Und dann hatten wir in dem einen Seminar, dass es wichtig ist, erstmal so bei sich zu bleiben, wenn man auch angegriffen wird. Verbal oder mit Argumenten. Oder man muss sich gegenüber der Schulrätin rechtfertigen oder so, dass man dann erstmal die Beine auf den Boden und erstmal ausatmen und die ausreden lassen, weil die wollen dir ja auch was sagen. Nicht zu früh eingrätschen und sagen, ja, aber jetzt erklär ich Ihnen das mal, warum ich mich so entschieden habe. So, das wollen die ja gar nicht hören. Die wollen sich ja auch erstmal ausbreiten. Und haben sich da auch Gedanken gemacht. Das fand ich, waren gute und auch praktische Hinweise, die ich da mitnehmen konnte. Oder beim letzten Mal hatten wir so ein Rollenspiel, das hat mich dann auch im Nachhinein noch/ Das hab ich am nächsten Tag dann auch umgesetzt. Da ging es darum, dass jemand, der mit mir als Schulleiter ein schlechtes Verhältnis hat, weil er mit einer Entscheidung nicht einverstanden ist, der also in seinem Kern irgendwie gekränkt war und zu sagen: Wie kommt man aus so einer gestörten Beziehung wieder raus? So. Und das ging/ Da war dabei eben auch offensichtlich, dass ich eben als Schulleiter auch eine Entscheidung treffen muss, die nicht unbedingt günstig ist für diese Person. Aber dennoch kann man versuchen, einen Faden wieder zu dem hinzubekommen zu/ Das hat Helle ganz gut gemacht, dass man sich da nicht rechtfertigt, sondern dass man vor allen Dingen achtzig Prozent reden lässt. Und so ging mir das, als ich die Entscheidung gesagt hab. Und beschreib nochmal und das öffnet die Leute dann schonmal mehr dann. Ohne, dass man ihnen dann sagt: Ich nehme meine Entscheidung zurück. Wir machen alles anders. Sondern einfach nur dieses Zuhören. Also das waren gute Hinweise fand ich. (Leader_C_2, Pos. 18) |

C. Interview guides

C1. Interview guide – leader team interview before training

Introduction

Vielen Dank für Ihre Bereitschaft zu diesem Interview. In diesem Gespräch geht es darum, herauszufinden, wie Sie die Beziehungen und die Schulkultur erleben, Ihre Ziele für EMS, und was aktuell wichtige Themen an Ihrer Schule sind. Dadurch soll auch ein gemeinsamer Reflektionsprozess darüber ermöglicht werden, wofür das Projekt "Empathie macht Schule" für Sie nützlich sein kann. Mir ist wichtig, zu betonen, dass ich der Schweigepflicht unterstehe und dieses Gespräch vertraulich ist. Alle Daten werden ausschließlich in pseudonymisierter Form gespeichert und ausgewertet. Um das Gespräch besser auswerten zu können, werde ich es aufzeichnen. Das Interview wird etwa 90 Minuten dauern.

Opening questions

- Als Schulleitungsteam, wie sehen Sie sich selbst und ihre Rolle beim Beginn eines solchen schulumfassenden Entwicklungsprojekts?

School culture

- Wie würden Sie die Kultur an Ihrer Schule beschreiben, also die Werte und das tägliche Miteinander, die Beziehungen?
    o Was ist typisch für Ihre Schule?
    o Was sind ganz generell die wichtigsten Faktoren, die das Miteinander an Ihrer Schule prägen und beeinflussen?
    o N1: Wie leben Sie die Werte – oder nicht?
    o N2: Was sind typische Sätze, Metaphern, etc. die man oft an Ihrer Schule hört?
    o N3: Was würden andere über die Kultur an Ihrer Schule sagen – Eltern, Außenstehende?

Crucial moments

- Was sind die besten Momente als SchulleiterIn?
    o N1: Wie erleben Sie in dem Moment Ihre Präsenz, Verbundenheit, Empathie?
- Wo erleben Sie in Ihrer Schule "Moments of Disruption," und was bemerken Sie über Ihre eigene innere Reaktion auf diese Momente?

EMS: Motivation and expectations and Leadership challenges

- Jetzt startet EMS. Was sind Ihre Ziele für Ihre Teilnahme bei EMS: Was erhoffen Sie sich?
    - N1: Wenn EMS für Sie ein Erfolg ist, was wird dann in fünf Jahren anders sein als heute?
    - N2: Was könnten Schwierigkeiten auf dem Weg sein?
    - N3: Gibt es Momente, in denen das, was Sie sich erhoffen, heute schon vorhanden ist und geschieht?
- Was sind die drei größten Herausforderungen, vor denen Sie mit Ihrer Schule als Organisation stehen?
- Was sind die wichtigsten Herausforderungen als Schulleitung im Kontakt mit dem Kollegium, den Schülern und den Eltern?

Phase 2: Artifact-based sculpting and systems sensing

- Um das Sprechen über Komplexen Zusammenhänge zu erleichtern, habe ich diese Utensilien mitgebracht. Mit denen kann man eine "Landkarte" erstellen. So können wir uns erst einmal anschauen, wie Sie den Ist-Zustand der Schule sehen: Also die Herausforderungen, das was gut ist, und sich selbst, Ihre Rolle darin. 3 Elemente müssen vorkommen: Sie selbst, EMS und die Beziehung zwischen Lehrer und Schüler.

Step 1: Creating a sculpture of the current state of the school

Es nicht darum, das perfekte Abbild der Schule oder eine schöne Skulptur zu formen und auch nicht darum, etwas richtig zu machen! So etwas kann immer nur eine Momentaufnahme sein. Was ich möchte, ist die Reflektion, wie Sie den Ist-Zustand Schule sehen. Wenn Sie außerdem das Gefühl haben, dass dieser Prozess für Sie hilfreich war und Sie gerne die Aufnahme haben möchten, kann ich Ihnen ein Transkript zukommen lassen, sobald wir eins haben.

- *Innere Widerstände gegen Übung, falls vorhanden, spürbar, abfragen und mit aufnehmen, damit weitergehen.*
- Beschreiben Sie mir bitte, was Sie dargestellt haben.

Step 2: Presencing the sculpture

Jetzt laufen wir einmal um Skulptur herum und betrachten Sie aus unterschiedlichen Richtungen. Wenn Sie sich diese Skulptur als Gesamtbild anschauen…

- Was lieben Sie an ihr? Was bringt Ihre besten Energien hervor?

- Welche Atmosphäre, welche Stimmung hat diese Skulptur?

    o Wenn die Skulptur als Ganzes sprechen könnte, was würde sie sagen?

- Was sind unangenehme Wahrheiten hier, etwas, das lieber vermieden wird?

- Was sind die Kernkonflikte?

- Was möchte gehen, verschwinden, sich auflösen?

- Was möchte entstehen / geboren werden?

- Wenn diese Situation für Sie kreiert wurde, um etwas zu lernen, was möchte sie Ihnen beibringen?

- Was ist das höchste Potenzial dieser Skulptur?

Phase 4: Creating a sculpture of the future potential of the system

Passen Sie die Skultpur so an, dass Sie die entstehende Zukunft, die Sie wahrnehmen, besser repräsentiert.

Debriefing

Open questions and de-briefing of the process

C2. Interview guide – leader team interview during training*

*conducted after cohort 1 completed 2 – 3 modules

Introduction repeated as in above interview guide.

Member-checking follow-up on interview 1:

Präsentieren von Kern-Zitaten aus Interview 1 inkl. Bilder der "Skulpturen":

- "Ich würde gerne kurz an unserer letztes Interview anschließen. … [Zusammenfassung von Kern-Themen aus Interview 1]. Habt ihr dazu noch irgendwelche Kommentare?"

Questions on COVID-19 pandemic:

- Wie haben Sie die Auswirkungen des Lockdowns die gesamte Lehr- und Lehrgemeinschaft an Ihrer Schule erlebt?
    - Nachfragen: Auswirkungen auf Ihre Zusammenarbeit mit den dem Kollegium, Eltern und Kindern?
    - Was war daran das Schwierigste für Sie?
    - Was hat Ihnen geholfen, mit so einer Herausforderung umzugehen?

- Wie erleben Sie die Auswirkungen des Social Distancings auf Ihre Beziehung und Zusammenarbeit mit den dem Kollegium, Eltern und Kindern?
    - Wie haben die Kinder die Erfahrungen/Veränderungen aufgenommen? Inwiefern zeigt sich das das auch während der Schulzeit?

- Hat sich durch diese Zeit eure Rolle als Schulleitung geändert?
- Gab es auch positive Aspekte? Dinge, die beizubehalten sich lohnen würde?
- Welche Rolle kann Empathie macht Schule für die Schule während der Pandemie spielen?

C3. Interview guide – leader team interview after training*

*conducted after cohort 1 completed 6 training modules.

Introduction

Vielen Dank für Ihre Bereitschaft zu diesem Interview. In diesem Gespräch geht es darum, herauszufinden, wie Sie sich Beziehungen an der Schule verändert haben bzw. gleichgeblieben sind. Wir werden gleich auf eine kleine Zeitreise gehen und uns die Inhalte der letzten beiden Interviews ansehen. Dann schauen wir, wie sich das inzwischen für euch verändert hat. Im Anschluss fokussieren wir uns darauf, wie ihr die Beziehungen an der Schule heute erlebt. Mir ist wichtig, erneut zu betonen, dass ich der Schweigepflicht unterstehe und dieses Gespräch vertraulich ist. Alle Daten werden ausschließlich in pseudonymisierter Form gespeichert und ausgewertet. Um das Gespräch besser auswerten zu können, werde ich es aufzeichnen. Das Interview wird etwa 60 Minuten dauern.

Member-checking follow-up on 2 previous interviews

Wenn Sie an die letzten 1,5 Jahre denkt – was geht euch da durch den Kopf?

Zeigen der Skulptur aus Interview 1, Kern-Themen aus Interviews 1 und 2 sowie ca. sieben Kern-Zitate aus beiden Interviews:

- Wenn ihr diese Bilder seht und die Aussagen dazu - was geht euch heute dazu durch den Kopf?
  - o Was hat sich inzwischen geändert? Was ist gleichgeblieben? Wie kam es zu den Änderungen?

Meso-Level Social Field Shifts in School Faculty – evocation

Wenden wir uns euren Beziehungen zu Kollegen und Eltern zu. Vorher habt ihr von diesem Beispiel gesprochen, was sich verändert hat. Ich möchte jetzt ein Beispiel ganz konkret besprechen. Wollt ihr dieses nehmen, oder gibt es da noch ein anderes? Gibt es ein Beispiel, das ihr beide erlebt habt? (Falls nicht: Jetzt werde ich dieses Beispiel mit dir durchsprechen – und du – andere Person - wirst mehr zuhören. Und danach kannst du deine Reflektion geben).

- Kannst du mir ein Beispiel anhand einer konkreten Situation schildern?
- Falls keine Beispiele einfallen: Gibt es Herausforderungen, an denen ihr während EMS gearbeitet habt?
  - o Wer war dabei, wo war es? Was ist konkret passiert? Warum hast du diese Situation ausgewählt, was war es, das für dich anders war?
  - o Wenn du dich an den Moment erinnerst, wie war er für dich? im Körper? Nimmst du Emotionen wahr? Was ging dir durch den Kopf?
  - o Wie würdest du die Atmosphäre beschreiben?

- o Wie deinen Kontakt zu den anderen Beteiligten? Welche Qualität hat der Kontakt? (Distanziert / nah / vertrauensvoll / skeptisch / ehrlich / verhalten / mitfühlend /....)
- o Hast du etwas an dir selbst bemerkt, etwas, das du anders gemacht oder gesagt hast als sonst? Was war es genau?
- o Wie wäre es normalerweise oder früher gewesen? Was genau wäre anders gewesen? Das was du sagst, deine Worte – oder was du tust? Oder das was in dir vorgeht, deine innere Reaktionen, was du über den anderen und dich denkst und fühlst? Nimm dir Zeit, dieser Frage nachzuspüren.

Other topics

COVID-19

Falls COVID-19 nicht erwähnt wurde:

- Ihr habt COVID nicht erwähnt. Gibt es davon noch Aspekte, die sich immer noch auf die Beziehungen auswirken und auf EMS?

Relationship quality at school

- Was würdest du dir von den Beziehungen so an der Schule wünschen? Also wo dürften die ein bisschen anders sein als sie jetzt sind?

Open question

- Gibt es noch andere Veränderungen, die wir noch nicht angesprochen haben, die ihr bedeutsam findet?

C4. Interview guide educators – after completion of training modules

Introduction

Introduction

Schön, dass ich die Möglichkeit bekomme für dieses Abschlussgespräch nach dem letzten Empathie-Macht Schule Modul. Dieses Gespräch wird maximal 50-60 Minuten dauern. Ich würde gerne über deine Erlebnisse mit EMS im Schulalltag sprechen. Dabei ist es für mich hilfreich, wenn du ein realistisches Bild davon berichtest, wie du dies erlebst. Mir ist wichtig, noch einmal zu betonen: Du kannst hier offen sprechen – ich unterstehe der Schweigepflicht und dieses Gespräch ist vertraulich. Alle Daten werden ausschließlich in pseudonymisierter Form gespeichert und ausgewertet. Um das Gespräch besser auswerten zu können, werde ich es aufzeichnen. Du kannst jederzeit das Gespräch beenden ohne dass dir Nachteile entstehen. Das Ganze dient dem Forschungsprojekt und dabei geht es uns im Großen und Ganzen ja darum, zu beforschen, wie Empathie an Schulen gefördert werden kann.

Phase 1: Opening question:

Ihr seid ja schon eine Reise mit EMS gegangen. Zu Beginn, bevor wir uns gleich den anderen Fragen zuwenden: Kannst du mir ein bißchen davon erzählen – wie war das für dich? Deine Erfahrungen mit Schülern und Kollegen? Was schätzt du daran? Was ist herausfordernd?

Phase 2: Change moment evocation phase (about *10 min. per example*):

1. Situation with child:

- Kannst du mir ein Beispiel anhand einer konkreten Situation in der Beziehung zu einem Kind schildern, in der du etwas neu ausprobiert hast, - etwas das für dich wichtig war?
- Falls keine Situation: Erinnerst du dich an konkrete Herausforderungen im Kontakt zu Schüler*innen, mit denen du in den EMS Modulen gearbeitet hast? Kannst du mir ein konkretes Beispiel nennen? Was ist danach passiert – wie ging das dann weiter, nachdem ihr darüber gesprochen und damit gearbeitet habt?

  o Wer war dabei, wo war es? Was ist konkret passiert? Warum hast du diese Situation ausgewählt, was war es, das für dich anders war?

  o Wenn du dich an den Moment erinnerst, wie war er für dich?

    ▪ im Körper? Nimmst du Emotionen wahr? Was ging dir durch den Kopf?

  o Wie würdest du die Atmosphäre beschreiben?

- o Wie deinen Kontakt zu den anderen Beteiligten? Welche Qualität hat der Kontakt? (Distanziert / nah / vertrauensvoll / skeptisch / ehrlich / verhalten / mitfühlend /….)
- o Hast du etwas an dir selbst bemerkt, etwas, das du anders gemacht oder gesagt hast als sonst? Was war es genau?
  - ▪ Wie wäre es normalerweise oder früher gewesen? Was genau wäre anders gewesen? Das was du sagst, deine Worte – oder was du tust? Oder das was in dir vorgeht, deine innere Reaktionen, was du über den anderen und dich denkst und fühlst? Nimm dir Zeit, dieser Frage nachzuspüren.

2. Further evocation questions:

- Repeat evocation of a change moment in relation to a parent.
- Repeat evocation, but in a challenging relationship lacking improvements:
  - o Jetzt haben wir über ein gutes Beispiel gesprochen, wie sich etwas gut verbessert hat. Aber wir alle wissen, es wird auch weiterhin Situationen geben, die schwer sind.
  - o Gibt es da etwas, wo sich während EMS nichts geändert hat, sondern die wirklich immernoch schwierig sind? Kannst du mir ein Beispiel mit einem Kind nennen und beschreiben?
    - ▪ Gleiche Follow-Up Fragen wie oben.

Phase 3: Open questions & ending

- Jetzt wo wir diese konkrete Situation besprochen haben, gibt es noch andere Dinge, die dir in den 1,5 Jahren aufgefallen sind?
  - o Nimmst du Veränderungen im Kollegium wahr?

C5. Interview guide educators – follow-up 1.5 years after completing the training

Phase 1: Whole-school implementation status

- Wie ist die Lage von EMS an deiner Schule heute?
  - Wurden Elemente von EMS in den Abläufen der Schule verankert?
- Inwiefern nimmst du wahr, dass EMS nachhaltige Auswirkungen hatte oder nicht?
  - Welche wären das, bzw. wenn Nein, woran liegt das?
- In welchem Ausmaß spielen Elemente von EMS in deinem Arbeitsalltag eine Rolle?
  - Inwiefern wurden Inhalte von EMS beibehalten oder zu Routinen in deinem Alltag (wenn überhaupt)?
- Was sind oder waren Hürden bei der Umsetzung von EMS?
  - Wie erlebst du die Passung von den Elementen von EMS mit deinem Alltag? Wobei war oder ist es nützlich?
- Wie groß oder klein siehst du die Akzeptanz von EMS an deiner Schule?
- Wie schätzt du generell die Motivation an deiner Schule und unter Kolleg*innen an, die Elemente von EMS weiterhin umzusetzen? Warum?

Phase 2: Member-Checking and Evaluation of Field Shift Sustainability

Vorstellen der Field-Shift-Rekonstruktion (Bildschirm-Teilen in Zoom, Grafik der Interaktionsmuster erklären und zeigen).

- Wie müsste ich dies verändern und anpassen, damit es besser zu deinem Erleben passt? Was habe ich nicht richtig verstanden?
- Wie nachhaltig war diese Veränderung?
  - Skalierungsfrage1: Auf einer Skala von 1 – 10, wie wahrscheinlich ist es, dass du in einer ähnlichen Situation auf die "geshiftete" Art handelst? ("1" heißt "nie," "10" heißt "immer")
  - Skalierungsfrage 2: Wie war es im Vergleich dazu vor EMS? Auf einer Skala von 1 – 10, wie wahrscheinlich war es vor EMS, dass du in einer ähnlichen Situation auf die "geshiftete" Art gehandelt hast? ("1" heißt "nie," "10" heißt "immer")
- Was geht dir noch zu diesen Veränderungen durch den Kopf?
- Gibt es noch etwas, das du sagen möchtest?

C6. Interview guide – focus group interview

Reflection to begin the focus group

Bitte nehmen Sie sich einen Moment und reflektieren Sie darüber, wie Sie EMS bisher wahrgenommen haben. Gab es einen persönlich bedeutsamen Moment während der letzten ESM Module? Schreiben Sie Antworten auf.

Perception of the EMS module

- Wie haben Sie die Module wahrgenommen – und die Zeit danach?
    - Gab es Veränderungen in Beziehung zu Schüler*innen, Eltern, Kolleg*innen?
    - Aktiv nachfragen, um Beispiele und Erläuterungen bitten.

Questions on COVID-19 pandemic

- Wie haben Sie die Auswirkungen des Lockdowns die gesamte Lehr- und Lehrgemeinschaft an Ihrer Schule erlebt?

    - Nachfragen: Auswirkungen auf Ihre Zusammenarbeit mit den dem Kollegium, Eltern und Kindern?
    - Was war daran das Schwierigste für Sie?
    - Was hat Ihnen geholfen, mit so einer Herausforderung umzugehen?

- Wie erleben Sie die Auswirkungen des Social Distancings auf Ihre Beziehung und Zusammenarbeit mit den dem Kollegium, Eltern und Kindern?

    - Wie haben die Kinder die Erfahrungen/Veränderungen aufgenommen? Inwiefern zeigt sich das das auch während der Schulzeit?

- Hat sich durch diese Zeit eure Rolle als Schulleitung geändert?
- Gab es auch positive Aspekte? Dinge, die beizubehalten sich lohnen würde?
- Welche Rolle kann Empathie macht Schule für die Schule während der Pandemie spielen?

Curriculum Vitae

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Education

2019-2023	Doctoral student, Psychology University Hospital, Heidelberg	
2012-2015	Humboldt University Berlin	Psychology (M. Sc.) Grade: 1,6 Grade thesis: 1,0
2014-2015	Max-Planck-Institute Dep. Social Neuroscience Leipzig and Berlin	Master thesis Prof. Dr. T. Singer & Dr. A. Böckler-Rättig
2007-2011	Albert-Ludwigs-University Freiburg	Psychology (B. Sc.) Grade: 1,5 Grade Bachelor thesis: 1,0

Professional Training

2019-2020	Center for Systems Awareness Cambridge, MA, USA	Compassionate Systems Master Practitioner (Dr. Peter Senge, Dr. Mette Böll)
2017-2020	German-Danish Institute for Family Therapy, Berlin	Family Therapy (Helle Jensen, Christine Ordnung)
2015-2017	German-Danish Institute for Family Therapy, Berlin	Training Empathy (Helle Jensen, Katinka Goetzsche)
2018	Center for Healthy Minds Madison, WI, USA	Micro-Phenomenological Interviews (Dr. Claire Petitmengin)

Professional Experience (Academic)

2019-2023	Scientific Assistant, Institute for Medical Psychology, Heidelberg University
2023	Affiliate Researcher, Systems Awareness Lab, Massachussetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.), Cambridge, USA

2018-2023	Generative Social Fields Research Initiative: Cooperation with Dr. M. Böll and Dr. P. Senge, M.I.T.
2018-2019	Lecturer on Generative Social Fields, Witten/Herdecke University
2017-2019	Scientific Assistant, GEBE e.V., Project: Empathie macht Schule
2016-2022	Lecturer on epistemology and therapy research, German-Danish Institute for Family Therapy, Berlin
2013-2015	Research Assistant (ReSource Project), Max-Planck-Institute, Dep. Social Neuroscience

Professional Experience (Other)

2021	Supervisor for educators
2019-2023	Facilitator and trainer in the ‚Empathie macht Schule' project
2017-2023	Process facilitator and organizational consultant
2016-2018	Assistant Consultant, Wilson Equities

Social Engagement

2022-2023	Global Social Witnessing (DIG-GSW), ERASMUS+ funded international project
2017-2019	Pocket Project for Collective Trauma Integration
2008-2011	Education for social-ecological transformation (EU-funded)

Scholarships

2018	Coordinated Management of Meaning Fellowship CMM Institute for Personal and Social Evolution, Oracle, Arizona, USA
2022	Graduation scholarship Landesgraduiertenakademie (Heidelberg university)

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Eidesstattliche Versicherung

1. Bei der eingereichten Dissertation zu dem Thema

"Exploring Generative Social Fields in Education During a Relational Competence Training"

handelt es sich um meine eigenständig erbrachte Leistung.

2. Ich habe nur die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt und mich keiner

unzulässigen Hilfe Dritter bedient. Insbesondere habe ich wörtlich oder sinngemäß aus

anderen Werken übernommene Inhalte als solche kenntlich gemacht.

3. Die Arbeit oder Teile davon habe ich bislang nicht an einer Hochschule des In- oder

Auslands als Bestandteil einer Prüfungs- oder Qualifikationsleistung vorgelegt.

4. Die Richtigkeit der vorstehenden Erklärungen bestätige ich.

5. Die Bedeutung der eidesstattlichen Versicherung und die strafrechtlichen Folgen einer unrichtigen oder unvollständigen eidesstattlichen Versicherung sind mir bekannt.

Ich versichere an Eides statt, dass ich nach bestem Wissen die reine Wahrheit erklärt und

nichts verschwiegen habe.

Ort und Datum   Unterschrift