


Let school start both at
8 a.m. and 10 a.m.

– how to create top performances
and quality of life in school





The daily rhythm changes
during puberty!

Practically all young people
are B-persons!

B-society is a global organisation with the mission to widen the time frames in society, in the labour market as well as in the institutions.

Our daily rhythm is genetically determined, and there are great variations as to when and how long an individual needs to sleep during the course of a 24-hour day . Research indicates that there are significant health consequences for B-persons who attempt to adapt to the traditional 9 to 5 clock-based societies. That is just one reason for arranging social time frames so that they more flexibly accommodate the variety of our individual daily rhythms.

B-society

works for the following:

- Working hours should be adapted to people's different daily rhythms. Make it possible to start work at A-time (7-8 a.m.) or B-time (10-11 a.m.). This will increase the productivity in companies, increase quality of life, decrease sickness absence and reduce stress.
- Schools should adapt to people's different daily rhythms. Research shows most people function as B-people between the ages of 12 and 20. The primary schools and upper secondary schools should reflect this by offering teaching in both A-rhythm and B-rhythm with starting times at either 8 a.m. or 10 a.m.
- The opening hours of kindergartens should be made flexible so they suit the different rhythms of families. For example every fourth institution could introduce new opening hours from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Clear and marked benefits come from a consideration of our biological differences – better health, better learning, increased productivity, better infrastructure utilization, and a general increase in work/life satisfaction and quality of life.

B-society works to create a society where everyone has the possibility of living and working in his or her own rhythm.

Our daily rhythm is genetic

Recent research has shown that our daily rhythms are genetically based.

B B-person is both a popular and a scientific term for a person who wakes later in the morning and usually does not feel energetic until after 10 a.m. On the other hand, the B-person can be productive until very late in the evening, and will not usually begin to feel sleepy until after midnight or later.

A In contrast, the A-person wakes early in the morning – commonly around 6 a.m. – and may feel energetic right away. Along with this early rising tendency the A-person gets tired early, and consequently will often be asleep around 10 p.m.

About 15-25 % of the population are distinct B-persons while 10-15% are A-persons. Of these 6% are extreme B and 2% are extreme A, while the remaining part of the population are mild A or mild B.

Research in biological rhythms reveals not only large differences in people's individual daily rhythms, but also in their need for sleep. One result is that the actual natural sleep patterns of B-persons are far different from society's demands within the traditional 9-5 time structure. Only 35% find it natural to sleep earlier than 12:30 a.m., while the rest prefer to go to sleep later provided that it is possible to listen to the inner biological clock.

The optimal periods for activity and restoration are thus genetically based. For example, research shows that B-persons' temperature is lower in the early morning because of their forced shifting of their own natural rhythms. That helps to explain why they may need time to wake up early in the morning, and why A-persons may feel ready for activity straight away.

Research in recent years strongly supports what many people have experienced and known for years: teenagers are most often B-persons. As the brain and the body undergo a colossal development during puberty and the teenage years, many daily rhythms will change as well. The changes result in more tiredness in the mornings and more energy in the evenings. The young person finds it difficult to fall asleep even with a lack of sleep, which has unfortunate negative consequences for the body's development. Sleep loss can bring about a chain reaction of obstacles in everyday life: the young people are either not fully awake or else entirely miss the first hours of school. They may also experience concentration difficulties, learning difficulties or mood swings.

New brain research suggests that school hours should include an option to begin at 11 a.m., so that teenagers can meet their need for sleep in accordance with their natural daily rhythm. The research shows that the majority score higher on tests that take place in the afternoon than tests given in the morning. It is thus demonstrated to be both healthy and academically best for teenagers to sleep late. Young people who need to sleep late in the morning are not lazy, but rather at risk of health impairment from being forced to get up early – against their inner biological clocks.

Research shows that many pupils receive lower than possible test scores during the upper secondary school years, solely because they change from being A- to B-persons during puberty and the teenage years.

B-society works to create primary schools and upper secondary school programmes that support the students' different daily rhythms. The majority of all young people between 12 and 20 years of age are B-persons, and a logical consequence of this is that primary and upper secondary schools should offer teaching after 10 a.m. A change of the starting time for teaching will result in more peak performance and a better quality of life for the students.



CASE:

What happens with B-persons in school?

Starting school at 8 a.m. creates a series of problems for a young B-person

Simon is a talented guy in the second year of upper secondary school. He has always been good in mathematics, and usually gets high grades. But lately Simon has found it really difficult to get out of bed in the morning, which affects his abilities in his 8 a.m. math class. So when his math teacher hands out a test, Simon is too tired and off his best form to perform up to his potential. The following day he gets the test back with the grade 6 – even though he was well prepared for the test.

Why does it go wrong for Simon?

His lower than normal grade does not mean that he is lazy, or that he is too stupid to get an education. The significant point is that Simon's daily rhythm has shifted to a later waking hour, but the math class still starts at 8 a.m.! The schedule did not shift to meet his needs. The result is that Simon no longer has the possibility of making the most of his potential due to an inflexible starting time for school classes.

THE FLEXIBLE CLASS

Should the pupils adapt to the school or should the school adapt to the pupils?

A flexible start for everyone

Now we arrive to the heart of the matter – can we find the flexibility that will allow full potential and higher life quality to be realized? As early as the 7th, 8th and 9th grades, and continuing into the upper secondary education years, students need the option of an A- or B-schedule as part of study line choices. The A-line pupils will start at 8 a.m., in keeping with early morning traditions, while the B-line classes will start at 10 a.m. or 11 a.m., and therefore go home at a later time than A-line pupils. This option supports the students' success in a labour market where more and more companies offer flexitime to their employees.

Moreover, for B-line students, it is recommended that the physically active and creative arts subjects be placed in the first part of each day, e.g. sport, visual art and drama. Subjects that are more knowledge-oriented should be placed after 12 p.m., e.g. math, physics, foreign languages.

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