CRESST REPORT 768

Denise Huang
Jamie Cho
Sima Mostafavi
Hannah H. Nam

WHAT WORKS? COMMON PRACTICES IN HIGH FUNCTIONING AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ACROSS THE NATION IN MATH, READING, SCIENCE, ARTS, TECHNOLOGY, AND HOMEWORK—A STUDY BY THE NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Denise Huang
Jamie Cho
Hannah H. Nam
Christine Oh
Aletha Harven
Seth Leon

THE AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM ASSESSMET GUIDE

MARCH, 2010

National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing

Graduate School of Education & Information Studies
UCLA | University of California, Los Angeles

What Works?
Common Practices in High Functioning Afterschool Programs Across the Nation in Math, Reading, Science, Arts, Technology, and Homework— A Study by the National Partnership

Denise Huang, Jamie Cho, Sima Mostafavi, & Hannah H. Nam
CRESST/University of California, Los Angeles

The Afterschool Assessment Guide

Denise Huang, Jamie Cho, Hannah H. Nam, Christine Oh, Aletha Harven, & Seth Leon
CRESST/University of California, Los Angeles

CRESST Report 768

March, 2010

National Center for Research on Evaluation,
Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST)
Center for the Study of Evaluation (CSE)
Graduate School of Education & Information Studies
University of California, Los Angeles
300 Charles E. Young Drive North
GSE&IS Building, Box 951522
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1522
(310) 206-1532

The work reported herein was supported under a subcontract from Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL, subcontract no. PO54604) funded by contract no. ED-03-CO-0048, as administered by the U.S. Department of Education.

To cite from this report, please use the following as your APA reference:
Huang, D., Cho, J., Mostafavi, S., Nam, H., H., Oh, C., Harven, A., & Leon, S. (2009). *What works? Common practices in high functioning afterschool programs across the nation in math, reading, science, arts, technology, and homework—A study by the National Partnership. The afterschool program assessment guide* (CRESST Report 768). Los Angeles: University of California, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHAT WORKS?

COMMON PRACTICES IN HIGH FUNCTIONING AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ACROSS THE NATION IN MATH, READING, SCIENCE, ARTS, TECHNOLOGY, AND HOMEWORK—A STUDY BY THE NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Denise Huang, Jamie Cho, Sima Mostafavi, and Hannah H. Nam
CRESST/University of California, Los Angeles

ABSTRACT

In an effort to identify and incorporate exemplary practices into existing and future afterschool programs, the U.S. Department of Education commissioned a large-scale evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) program. The purpose of this evaluation project was to develop resources and professional development that addresses issues relating to the establishment and sustainability of afterschool programs. Fifty-three high functioning programs representative across eight regional divisions of the nation, including rural and urban programs, community-based and school district related programs, were identified using rigorous methods. Exemplary practices in program organization, program structure, and especially in content delivery were studied. The findings were synthesized into the Afterschool Toolkit that was made available to programs nationwide via the world-wide-web. Professional development was conducted consistently and extensively throughout the nation.

INTRODUCTION

Since the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002), a greater emphasis has been placed on academic development during the afterschool hours. Research has found that students' participation in afterschool programs is beneficial to academic achievement and social adjustment (Pierce, Hamm, & Vandell, 1999; Posner & Vandell, 1994). In fact, a recent longitudinal study conducted by Mahoney, Lord, and Carryl (2005) found that students who participated in afterschool programs had significantly higher reading achievement and were rated by teachers as having a greater expectancy of success than students who did not participate in afterschool programs.

One mechanism in which afterschool programs influence students' academic achievement is through the provision of homework assistance. An evaluation of 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) programs conducted by Mathematica Policy Research

(Dynarski, et al., 2003) noted that homework sessions tend to be the most common type of academic support both in elementary and middle school programs; yet the quality of support is generally low. At the same time, studies have found that homework and tutoring programs that rely on untrained or minimally trained volunteers often do little to boost students' academic performance (Fashola, 2002). Instead, research on effective approaches to teaching and learning continue to emphasize the need to actively engage students and delve deeply into subject matter, providing "opportunities to learn with understanding" in combination with "a deep foundation of factual knowledge" (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000, p. 16).

In addition to the challenges around hiring qualified staff members in afterschool programs, afterschool programs can also be plagued with attrition and a low frequency of student participation (Dynarski, et al., 2003; Grossman, et al., 2002). Attrition and low attendance are of particular concern because research has found that those students whom participate in afterschool programs the longest (both in terms of frequencies and durations) make the biggest gains (Goldschmidt, Huang, & Chinen, 2007; Huang et. al, 2006; Lamare, 1997) and higher rates of participation in afterschool programs resulted in higher scores on academic standardized tests in mathematics, reading, and language arts (Huang, Gribbons, Kim, Lee, & Baker, 2000). Similarly, Muñoz (2002) found a positive correlation between number of visits to afterschool programs and improved school attendance and academic achievement. Thus students who infrequently attend the afterschool programs are unlikely to reap academic and social benefits.

In an effort to identify and incorporate exemplary practices into existing and future afterschool programs, the U.S. Department of Education decided to commission a large-scale evaluation of the 21st CCLC program. The purpose of this evaluation project was to: develop resources and professional development that addresses issues relating to the establishment and sustainability of afterschool programs; provide models, indicators of promising practices, and other descriptive information that local sites can access in planning new afterschool programs or improving existing ones (including the Promising Practices in Afterschool System and the Harvard Family Research Project's database of afterschool programs); and assess the effectiveness of afterschool programs in general, including attention to performance standards, review and meta-analyses of research, and rigorous evaluation methods to identify "what works."

In 2003, through a competitive solicitation process, the National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning, consisting of the Southwest Educational Laboratory (SEDL) and in partnership with the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST), the Mid-Continent Resources for Education and Learning (McREL), the

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), and the WGBH Educational Foundation, SERVE Inc., and the Institute for Responsive Education (IRE)[1], contracted with the U.S. Department of Education in this project to support program quality among the growing number of 21st CCLCs throughout the United States. This 5-year project provided strategies, tools, and technical assistance to afterschool programs to address two continuing challenges identified via research on afterschool programs: (a) Eensure that programs offer high quality, researched-based academic content utilizing appropriate methods of teaching and learning, and (b) Eensure that programs are able to attract and retain students who participate regularly and thus can benefit from these investments.

There were five major tasks for this study aiming at improving the delivery and quality of academic content, teaching, and professional development in afterschool programs.

Task 1. Identification of afterschool sites across the U.S. that are demonstrating exemplary or promising practices.

Task 2. Validation of afterschool success in the content areas of reading, math, science, arts, technology, and homework help through data analysis and site visitation.

Task 3. Product development of tools, models, expertise, and other assistance to increase the number of promising and exemplary afterschool sites across the U.S.

Task 4. Provision of technical assistance to promising afterschool sites to help them achieve "exemplary" status, as well as support of state education agencies in building their own capacity for technical assistance in order to, in turn, assist grantees in the same technical assistance-building process.

Task 5. Partnering with the U.S. Department of Education and state education agencies to provide professional development opportunities for afterschool sites in adopting promising and exemplary practices, specifically in content areas designed to increase student achievement and attract high levels of student participation.

The role of CRESST within the National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning (NPQAL) was to accomplish Tasks 1 and 2 and to advise on the implementation of Tasks 3–5 by SEDL. In Years 1–3 of the study, Task 1 was completed after a comprehensive search and selection procedures involving primary and secondary screenings of afterschool programs throughout the U.S. These screenings were based on an established set of criteria, including evidence of academic performance of attendees, Annual Performance Report (APR) data, 21st CCLC Profile and Performance Information Collection System (PPICS) data, sample size, and recommendations from regional partners. As a result of this process, a total of 53 afterschool programs were identified and recruited for site visits by Partnership researchers. For Task 2, site visits were conducted at two sites under each afterschool

[1] The IRE left the NPQAL in 2004.

program, and interviews were conducted with the project director, site coordinators, and program instructors. In addition, surveys were administered to site instructors, site coordinators, and parents. For Task 3, toolkits and self-assessments were created, based on this study's results, to provide afterschool programs with research-based tools and strategies to improve curriculum implementation in the six content areas (math, reading, science, technology, arts, and homework), and to evaluate their programs regularly and independently.

Purpose of the Report

This report provides a synthesis of the qualitative and quantitative findings for the field work conducted across the nation and the validation of the promising practices across the six content areas, triangulating interviews, survey, and observation data. The following sections describe the 13 criteria presented in CRESST's Theoretical Logic Model (see Figure 1) and the study design, methods, and results of the validation of promising and exemplary practices in these content focuses:

1. The Study Design Section discusses the program selection process, as well as CRESST's process in developing the indicator system that guided validation.
2. The Methodology and Validation Procedures Section explains the Partnership's data collection processes, and elaborates on evaluation methodology, procedures, and instruments employed by CRESST in the analyses.
3. The Internal Program Structure Section describes the Internal Program Structure of the 53 afterschool programs in the study sample.
4. Program Process Section provides the findings on program process, including parent involvement, connecting with the community, and relationship building with the students.
5. Goal Setting and Curricular Practices Section examines program-based content practices in terms of curricular goals, alignment with state standards, and links to day-school curricula. This section also summarizes findings on student enrichment and research-based practices.
6. The Evaluative Structures and Program Impact Section summarizes the results of program impact, and
7. Implications and Conclusion Section highlights overall common exemplary afterschool practices, as well as the quantitative analysis.

STUDY DESIGN

Identification of Promising Afterschool Practices

This section describes the Partnership's data collection processes, and elaborates on methodology, procedures, and instruments developed by CRESST. The first year of the study

focused on reading and math content practices, the second year of the study focused on science and arts content practices, and the third year of the study focused on technology and homework help practices. First, an indicator system was designed to guide the instrument development and validation procedures.

Preparation Process for Development of the Indicator System and Standards

To develop an indicator system for program identification and validation, CRESST drew on a number of sources for information and expertise throughout the process. First was an extensive review of the existing research literature on afterschool programs, investigating the organizational, curricular, and environmental variables that have been linked to program quality. CRESST then reviewed publications from organizations across the country involved in afterschool program evaluation and support. These organizations included the National Center for Community Education, Promising Practices in After School Systems, the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, the Harvard Family Research Project, the National Community Education Association, the After School Alliance, the After School Corporation, the C.S. Mott Foundation, Learning Point Associates, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, and the Institute for Educational Science. A review of these sources focused on common variables and processes associated with positive afterschool program outcomes.

CRESST also received considerable guidance for indicator development from the Partnership's Content Focus Teams. Math is lead by McREL, Reading is lead by NWREL, Science and Homework Help are led by SERVE, and Arts and Technology are led by SEDL. Harris Cooper, the Steering Committee member who is the recognized expert in Homework studies provided his expert guidance in homework and technical issues, as did Liz Reisner, Priscilla Little, and other members of the Steering Committee. Teams convened and provided CRESST with their feedback on key curriculum content in their respective areas of expertise.

The Indicator System to Guide the Validation Process

To design an indicator system that could validate promising and exemplary practices, it was necessary to define the essential elements in a quality afterschool program. In general, the quality of afterschool programs was defined as the ability "to deliver basic developmental inputs, which translate into practices and principles at the staff, program, and organizational level, and which result in positive outcomes for participants" (Hall, Yohalem, Tolman, & Wilson, 2003, p.51). Child development theories such as those by Bronfenbrenner (1979), Confrey (1991), Piaget (1952, 1964), and Vygotsky (1978) were helpful in providing a better understanding of how afterschool programs benefit student learning. These theories describe

the importance of the social context of learning and how learning or cognitive development can be stimulated through interaction with peers and adults.

After extensive literature review and consultation, three central themes emerged: program quality evolves from the (a) setting of goals and evaluations, (b) curricular quality, and (c) program environment. Setting of goals and evaluations involves theory and research-based programming, program structure, setting of desired outcomes, and ongoing evaluation to ensure that goals are being met. Determination of curricular quality entails academic collaboration (linkage of afterschool programs to the day school), and opportunities for students to practice skills and reinforce motivation and engagement. Understanding of the program environment includes social collaboration (school-staff communication), adequacy of physical and human resources. A logic model (Figure 1) was developed to guide the validation process of identifying promising and exemplary practices.

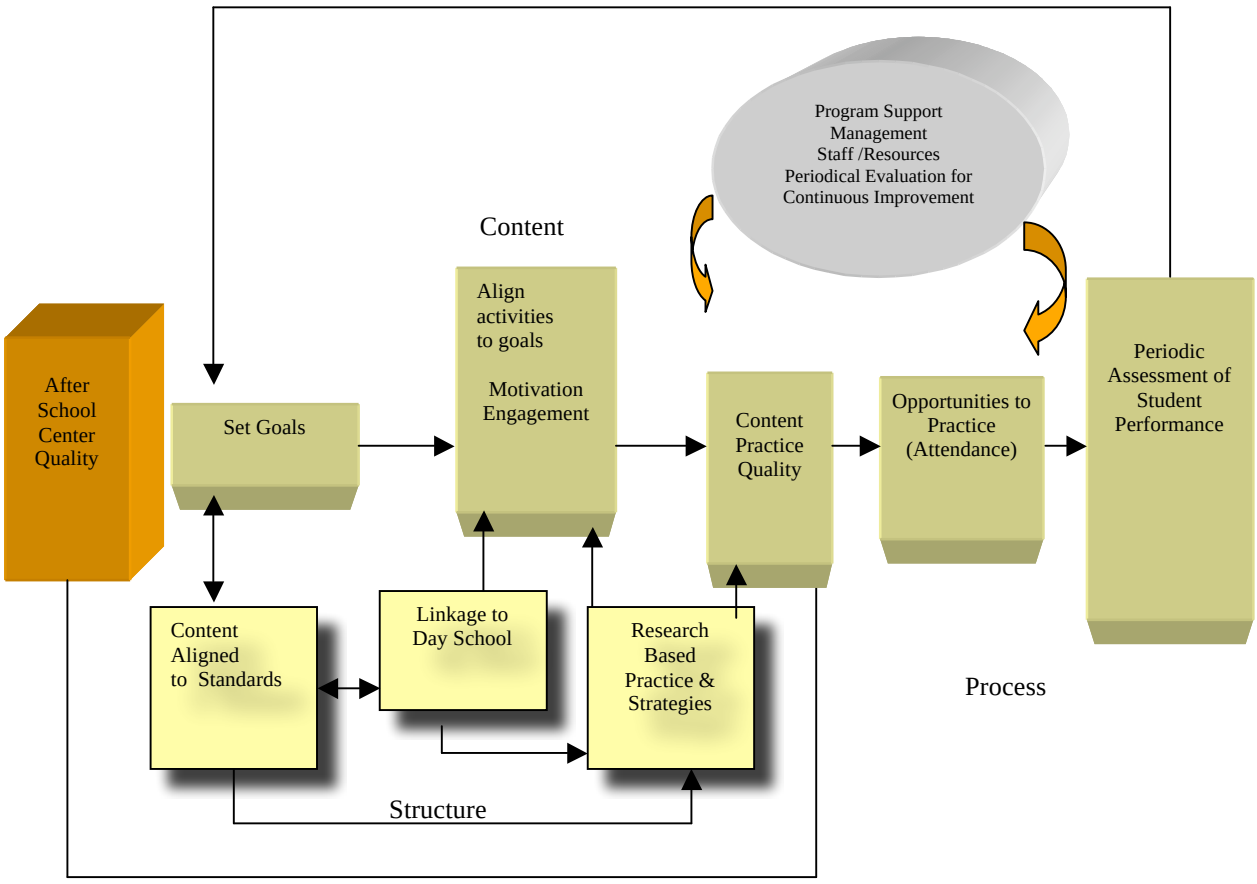


Figure 1. Theoretical logic model.

This model recognized 13 components indicative of success in delivering quality content and maintaining effective functionality in an afterschool setting:

- Setting of clear goals for content area practice (i.e., reading, math, science, arts, technology, and homework help)
- Alignment of research-based activities to achieve goals
- Alignment of practice content materials with state standards
- Links between practice content activities and day-school activities
- Use of research-based curriculum and teaching strategies
- Provision of a positive program environment
- Employment of motivational strategies to engage students in learning
- Promotion of student engagement (e.g., encouraging meaningful experiences)
- Effective program management/support/resources (e.g., staff/student ratio, staff educational experience, ongoing evaluation)
- Provision of opportunities for student practice
- Periodic evaluation to check program effectiveness
- Periodic assessment to review student progress
- Resetting goals according to assessment results

These indicators guided CRESST's development of observation and site visit protocols, and aided partnership researchers in the implementation of the resulting instruments. Furthermore, this model provides a framework in examining the larger context of the afterschool environment, and assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of content practices at participating sites. One of the main objectives of this final report is to highlight the components of the theoretical logic model that are most likely to lead to program success.

Program Identification

The first task on this project was to identify 21st CCLC programs across the U.S. that are demonstrating exemplary or promising practices in six content areas: reading, math, science, arts, technology, and homework help. Programs in all the content areas were selected based upon nominations from state coordinators and experts within the field, APR/PPICS data, and telephone interviews with program representatives. The next section describes the process by which the programs were selected for the study sample.

Program Criteria

The APR/PPICS were the primary data sources used to identify promising programs.[2] These reports were submitted by the 21st CCLC programs, and were provided to CRESST by the U.S. Department of Education. The APRs provided information including program objectives, grade levels served, number of students served, student demographics, student academic achievement data, hours/days per week the specific content curriculum offered, number of staff members in the program, and percentage of credentialed staff members. Information from 1,600 grantees was available for the selection process; however, due to the variation in program types and size with different curricula foci, criteria for selection were different across the different content areas. The criteria for each year are listed in the following text:

Year 1 – Reading and Math:

- Each program should have 100 students or more.
- Each program should have a minimum of 3 years of operation history to ensure that the content practice has the capacity to maintain its effects and show some signs of stability.
- Each program should show that at least three of its sites offer the requisite content practices, as an indicator of stability and to improve the probability for the future success of practice duplication.
- Content practices should be offered a minimum of three times per week in order to allow sufficient time for student exposure to practices and materials, and to strengthen dosage effects.

Year 2 – Science and Arts:

- Each program should have 50 students or more.
- Each program must show a minimum of 3 years of operation history to ensure that the content practice has the capacity to maintain its effects and show some signs of stability.
- Each program must show that at least two of its sites are offering the requisite content practices, as an indicator of stability and to improve the probability for the future success of practice duplication.
- Content practices must be offered a minimum of two times per week in order to allow sufficient time for students to be exposed to the practices and to absorb the materials.
- Content practice at both arts and science programs should have a strong focus on at least one of the major disciplines. For arts programs, this could include a focus on dance, music, theater, or visual arts. For science programs, this could include a focus on physical science, life science, earth and space science, science and technology, science in personal and social perspectives, or history and nature of science.

[2] However, for Year 2, the U.S. Department of Education contracted Learning Point to convert the APR into electronic versions called PPICS.

Year 3 – Technology and Homework:

- Each program should have 50 students or more.
- Each program must show a minimum of 2 years of operation history to ensure that the content practice has the capacity to maintain its effects and show some signs of stability.
- Each program must show that at least two of its sites are offering the requisite content practices, as an indicator of stability and to improve the probability for the future success of practice duplication.
- *For Technology Only:* Each program must show a minimum of 1 year using the technology curriculum.

Most important was the evidence of success in promoting student learning, as derived from the 2002 APRs for Year 1, 2004 APRs and PPICS for Year 2, and 2005 PPICS for Year 3 in the following categories:

1. Meeting/exceeding goals (as stated it the APR/PPICS). Programs that exceeded any of their stated goals were identified.
2. Teacher survey results. The 10 items constituting the teacher surveys reported in the APR/PPICS were reduced to one dimension using factor analysis (each of the items correlated with the single factor with correlations ranging from .71 to .92). Higher scores indicated more "yes" responses to the teacher survey questions, generally implying higher quality.
3. Academic performance of attendees. Reported academic data came in three forms: (a) grade gains, (b) grade levels (above proficiency, at proficiency, etc.), and (c) percentile ranks. Because only a small subset of programs reported both percentile ranks and grade level gains scores for their attendees, it was necessary to standardize each score (mean = 0, standard deviation = 1) to make the different metrics reasonably comparable. To assure that programs working with low academic performers would not be penalized, a matched gains procedure was used. This process allowed programs starting with very low achievement, but demonstrating significant gains, an equal opportunity to be recognized and selected. Thus, academic scores from all program sites were rescaled and measures of percentage gains over the previous academic year were created. These standardized scores were then aggregated from the site to the program level and weighted by the number of attendees at each site.

Next, these five sets of scores (exceeding performance, teacher survey results, grade change, grade level change, and/or percentile rank change) were correlated to determine the consistency of results. The correlations were surprisingly low across the measures, and this necessitated focusing on the top performers by content area (i.e., basing standardized units above the mean grade level change or percentile rank change). In this way, even though the units of measure were not exactly the same, it was less significant because it was a center's deviation from the mean that was most critical.

Finally, although the original intention was to select only those afterschool programs demonstrating high achievement gains and exceeding their goals, relatively few of the top performers exceeded their goals. Thus the original criteria were modified to require that at minimum, selected afterschool programs should meet all of their stated goals. Furthermore, given that academic scores were unlikely to capture the totality of program quality, steps were taken to expand the pool beyond those showing the greatest academic gains. All programs exceeding one or more of their goals were also included in the final sample, as long as they did not demonstrate any academic declines. In Year 1, as a blinded procedure to validate the site selection methodology, five math and five reading programs were randomly selected and blended into the final pool to serve as comparison control. The end result was the selection of 53 programs including 15 for math, 15 for reading, 9 for science, 9 for arts, 9 for technology, and 10 for homework. Furthermore, in order to assure promising practices in the general population are not overlooked, more than seven non-CCLC programs[3] were also recommended by State Region Coordinators and experts in the field to be included for further investigation.

Secondary Screening

After the initial selection of 342 programs (i.e., 47 reading and math programs, 157 science and arts programs, and 138 technology and homework help programs), additional screening activities occurred to narrow the pool of 342 down to 10 promising program candidates in each content area:

Telephone Screening

CRESST staff and the NPQAL staff (blinded to the control procedures) attempted contact with each of the selected programs by telephone in order to introduce them to the project and to collect updated and/or additional program information that was not available through the APR/PPICS. The telephone screening with program representatives covered three primary topics: (a) program background, (b) content focus, and (c) self-evaluation/assessment methods. In terms of basic background information, the representatives were asked how long the site had been in operation, how many sites existed within their program, the population(s) served, the number of days and/or hours a week the program was in operation, and how they would characterize the relationship, if any, between the afterschool program and the day school. Representatives were also asked about program goals, content areas covered, curricular links to standards, the nature of program instruction (purchased versus self-designed curricula, types of activities provided in the instruction of

[3]Programs not funded by the 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

the six content areas, and components of their programs that were particularly noteworthy. Screening questions also focused on internal and external program evaluations and evidence of specific content impact on student achievement, learning, retention, and attendance.

Representatives were also asked to provide supporting materials including: program brochures, sample lesson plans, goals and objectives, curricular mapping documents (i.e., linking afterschool content area instruction with state standards or day-school curriculum), and any other evidence of effective practice that the programs were willing to share. In some cases, CRESST used program evaluation reports in the selection process. Programs were also asked to recommend two of their sites for the 'Best Practices' site visits, in the event that their program was selected as part of the final sample. For those CCLC programs that were selected, the two sites identified by APR/PPICS data were discussed with the Project Director for a final decision.

Through the secondary screening process the number of programs was narrowed and those meeting the criteria were submitted for a final approval process. It should also be noted here that the 10 random programs thrown into the selection pool as control measures were screened out during the process. Thus validating the screening procedure was effective.

Final Sample Selection

The proposed list of pre-identified programs was reviewed by CRESST researchers and sent to all partners and steering committee members within NPQAL for review and suggestions. In addition to the preliminary criteria previously mentioned, program finalists were selected based on factors such as: standards and research-based curricula and instruction, links to day school, effective integration of content practices into afterschool program instruction, staff qualifications, and evidence of program impact. After careful screening and group deliberations, 60 program finalists[4] were selected and presented to our Content Experts, the Steering Committee, and the U.S. Department of Education for suggestions and feedback. The NPQAL, the Steering Committee, and the U.S. Department of Education reviewed and approved the list, and the NPQAL staff contacted the approved afterschool programs to request their participation in the project. In total, 53 programs[5] agreed to participate in the site visits.

[4] 10 candidates from each content area.

[5] The program sample consisted of 11 reading, 7 math, 9 arts, 9 science, 10 technology, and 7 homework help programs. The number of reading programs was increased to 11 as one program that was initially chosen as part of the math sample was found to be more focused on reading during the site visits.

As detailed in the Methodology section of this report, two sites within each of the selected afterschool programs were included in the site visits. Specific considerations were taken to ensure that rural programs were represented in the final selections. Table 1 shows the geographical distribution of the 53 final programs selected. As shown in the table, there are eight rural programs and 45 urban programs. The representation is highest at the Mid-South region with 10 programs selected, followed by South-West and North-East with nine programs selected in each region.

Table 1

Geographical Distribution of Afterschool Programs

	Regions: Rural (R) /Urban (U)																
Content Areas	*North-West*		*South-West*		*Mid-South*		*Mid-West*		*South-East*		*Mid-Atlantic*		*North-East*		*North-Central*		Total
	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	
Reading		1		2		1		1	1			1		2		2	11
Math				1		2		1		1		1		1			7
Art		2		2		1		1				1		1		1	9
Science				1	1	3		1		1		1		1			9
Technology				3	1	1	2			1				2			10
Homework		2								1	1		2			1	7
Total	**0**	**5**	**0**	**9**	**2**	**8**	**2**	**4**	**1**	**4**	**1**	**4**	**2**	**7**	**0**	**4**	**53**

As seen in Table 2, out of the 53 programs, 33 (62%) are affiliated with school districts, and 20 programs are community-based (38%). Within the 20 community-based programs, 10 of them are run by large non-profit organizations such as YMCA, Boys and Girls club, LA's BEST, Foundations Inc., The After School Corporation, Children's Aid Society, etc. In addition, science, arts, and technology programs each have two programs that are actively collaborating with local universities or colleges. Except for science (both of the science programs that collaborated with local universities are district-affiliated), the large non-profit community-based programs were more likely to collaborate with local universities and colleges. Some of the math, reading, and homework programs used local college students as assistants and volunteers, but none of them were observed to be actively collaborating with universities or colleges. Additionally, none of the programs identified in this study were faith-based.

Table 2

Programs Affiliations by Content

Content area	Affiliated with school districts	Community-based	
		CBO	Non-Profit
Reading	6	2	3
Math	4	2	1
Art	6	2	1
Science	6	2	1
Technology	6	1	3
Homework	5	1	1
Total	**33**	**10**	**10**

Note. CBO = Community-based organization.

METHODOLOGY AND VALIDATION PROCEDURES

In order to provide information that can be useful in improving academic content, teaching, and professional development in afterschool programs throughout the United States, the current study focused on instructional quality by identifying and gathering information on programs exhibiting "best practices." A multi-method strategy incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data analyses—including surveys, site observations, and interviews—was employed in data collection. SEDL staff and partners conducted site visits and data collection on identified programs from 2004–2007. The following sections describe the study participants, the measures and protocols used, as well as the data collection procedures.

Participants

Program Sample

As described in the Introduction Section of this report, all programs were selected for this study using a complex process that included the development of selection criteria, a review of APR/PPICS and other data sources, and secondary screenings by telephone interview. The final sample consisted of 53 programs located throughout the United States. Within each program, two specific sites were selected for visitation. These sites were chosen based on recommendations by a program representative who had participated in the secondary screening process.

Most of the programs had been in operation for less than 10 years, with nearly all programs reporting between 3–7 years of operation. Depending on the geographical regions

of the programs, the populations served across most programs were ethnically diverse, serving primarily lower income students. The most common ethnic group served was Hispanic or African American, but other populations included Asian/Pacific Islanders, Portuguese, Dominican, and Whites. Whereas White students had higher representation in the rural programs, most urban programs served a majority of English Language Learners populations, with Spanish being the most common primary language.

Based on the theories and indicators of the theoretical logic model, a more content focused validation model (Figure 2) was designed to provide structural framework for instrument development, examination of specific content practices, and data analyses for this study.

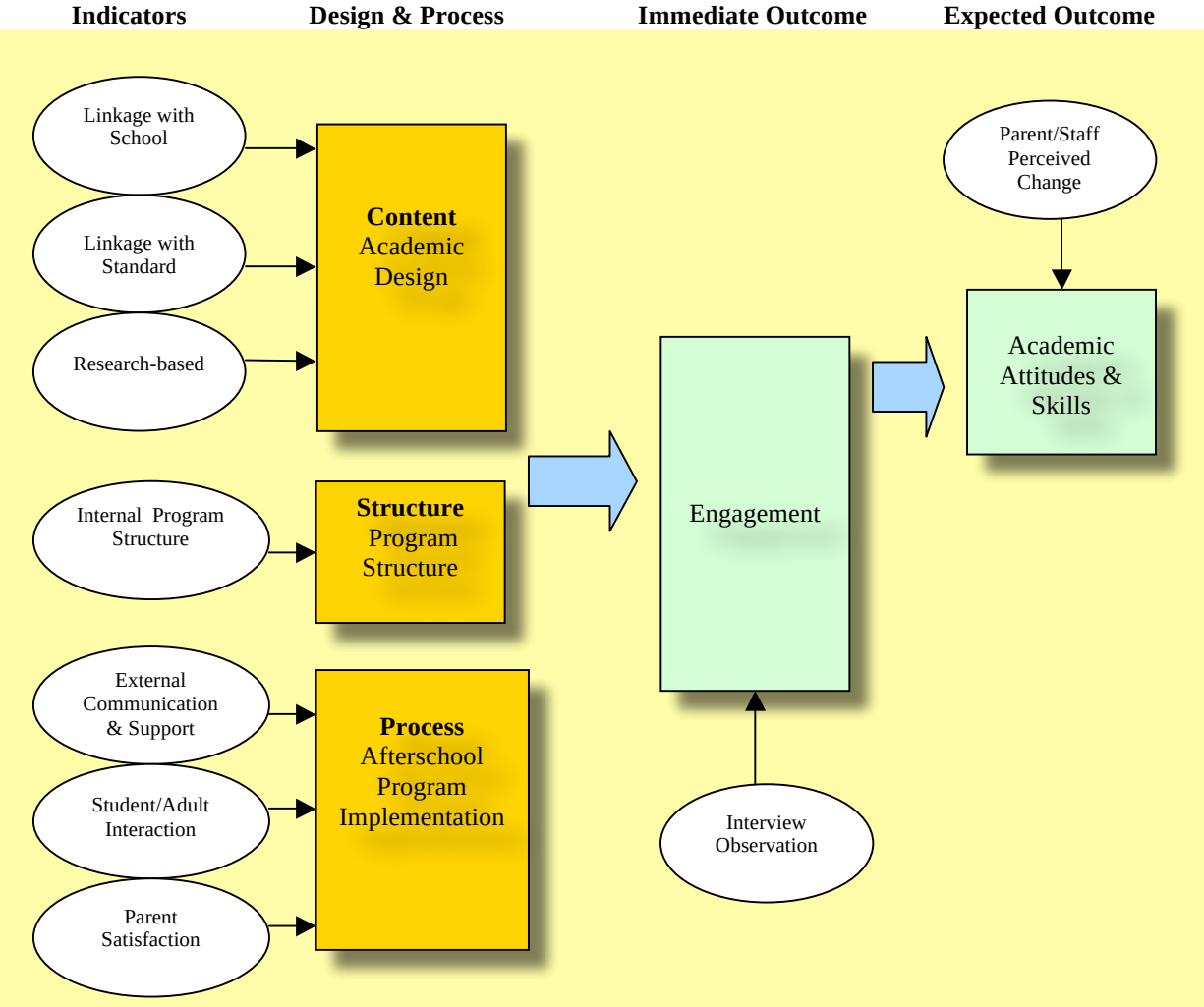


Figure 2. Validation model.

As shown in the validation model, high quality content practices are expected to show strength in their curricular content as indicated by linkage with school, linkage to standards, and research-based practices. The Internal program structure is indicated by program organization, duration and frequency of instruction, staff experience and education, governance/leadership, and professional development. The program process is indicated by external communication and support, student/staff interaction, and parent satisfaction. The main focus of this study will be on program content, and examining how program process can enhance curricular content and student engagement in math, reading, science, arts, technology, and homework (in Appendix A content-specified models are shown).

Measures/Instruments

All data collection instruments were developed by CRESST. Different versions of the instruments were created to cover the six content areas. The following is a brief overview of these qualitative measures:

Staff Survey: The staff survey was administered to participating afterschool program site coordinators and instructors. The survey included questions about content-specific curriculum, general instructional practices and activities, and organizational or structural characteristics.

Parent Survey: A survey was distributed to parents of the student participants. Items focused on perceived program satisfaction, opportunities for parental involvement, as well as student impact.

Teacher Survey: A survey was distributed to day-school teachers whose students were also in the afterschool program for Years 2 and 3.[6] Survey questions looked at their knowledge of the afterschool curriculum, as well as perceived changes in student attitudes, knowledge, and performance due to participation in the program.

Interview Protocols: The purpose of the interview was to gather information on the general nature and structure of the afterschool program to better identify the qualities of an exemplary, "best practices" program. Various forms of the interviews were developed for project directors, site coordinators and site instructors to specifically address questions that were most relevant to the interviewee. Overall, all interview protocols covered a number of areas including general program background information, content area instructional strategies and other student-based activities, program organization and structure, external communication and support, student-adult interactions, and program outcomes and impact on students.

Observation Protocol: A structured observation protocol, including both content-specific and general instruction items, was used. The protocol included scales, checklists, and open-ended questions focusing on the content and quality of after-school instructional practice. The closed-ended portion of the instrument allowed

[6] Teacher surveys were not utilized for Year 1 due to scheduling conflicts.

researchers to assess specific aspects of program implementation and structure in the different content areas. The open-ended portion of the observation instrument provided an overall description of the lesson and classroom climate.

Observation Report: The site visit team completed an observation report based on the report template provided by CRESST. The information provided in the observation reports was used to supplement and triangulate with the other data sources.

CRESST provided a 2-day professional development for the NPQAL staff and content advisory team consultants who conducted the site visits. The first professional development occurred in March 2004 at the UCLA campus and additional development was provided via teleconference for new site visit staff later that year. For Years 2 and 3, CRESST provided training via teleconference only. The professional development covered:

- Pre-site visit preparation activities
- Understanding of site visit organization and scheduling
- Survey collection
- Use of interview and observation protocols
- Collection of archived data
- Debriefing/completing site visit reports

Procedures: Qualitative Methodologies

Site Visit Plan

Two sites within each program were included in the site visit plan. At each site, surveys, interviews, and observations were completed. CRESST provided a program-level checklist to guide the collection of all data and any additional information shared regarding the program.

Observations

NPQAL researchers observed two instructors at each site. Site visit teams prepared observation reports based on the report template developed by CRESST to provide a summary of their site visit experiences. These reports, field notes, and any supplemental materials collected were then sent to CRESST and the information provided was used to further triangulate the findings. Table 3 shows the total number of observations and number of programs and sites visited under each content area.

Table 3

Number of Site Visits and Observations

Content area	Total number of programs	Total number of site visits	Total number of observations
Reading	11	20	38
Math	7	14	30
Arts	9	16	48
Science	9	18	32
Technology	10	14	31
Homework	7	14	25
Total	**53**	**44**	**104**

Interviews

Project directors, site coordinators, instructors and other afterschool program staff members[7] who volunteered to participate in the study (N = 338) were interviewed in person by NPQAL researchers. The interviews lasted approximately 1 hour. Table 4 illustrates the number of interviews conducted per program.

Table 4

Number of Interviews by Position

Content Area	Project director interviews	Site coordinator interviews	Instructor interviews	Other interviews	Total
Reading	11	16	30	6	63
Math	7	14	21	5	47
Arts	9	16	31	15	71
Science	9	13	23	11	56
Technology	8	15	26	5	54
Homework	10	14	19	4	47
Total	**54**	**88**	**150**	**46**	**338**

The interviews were audio taped to ensure data accuracy, although participants were given the option to decline having their interviews recorded, none did. Interview questions were focused on topics related to (a) professional background and/or professional

[7] This also includes project managers, academic and community liaisons, community partnership managers, school day principals, tutors, etc.

development and experience with afterschool programs; (b) program content knowledge, curriculum, and instructional methodology specific to instructional practices in the six content areas; (c) internal site structure and organizational characteristics of the afterschool programs; (d) external instructional communication and support; and (e) program evaluation and areas of perceived program impact. The interview protocol varied slightly depending on the interviewee's position. For example, project directors were not asked questions specific to curriculum implementation or instructional strategies, whereas instructors were. The site visit team also had the option of conducting additional interviews depending on the specific characteristics of a given program or site.

Once the taped interviews were completed and transcribed, CRESST researchers created codes and sub-codes using an inductive approach to analyze the data. A general review of the transcriptions informed the development of an initial code set that reflected salient concepts and common responses across programs, sites, and respondents. Researchers then used the initial code set to qualitatively analyze a small subset of interviews. Upon completion of these tasks, researchers condensed initial codes and developed additional codes to better reflect the data. Coding reliability was attained through researcher consensus. CRESST used the Atlas.ti statistical software package to code the interviews.

Quantitative Methodologies

Surveys

All surveys were distributed to the programs prior to the site visits. The programs assisted in the administration of the survey instruments, which were then collected by the NPQAL team at the time of the site visits. Surveys were administered to parents, day-school teachers, and afterschool program staff including site coordinators, instructors, program workers, playground workers, activity coaches, partner organization staff, program experts, counselors, and volunteers. Completed surveys from each program were returned to CRESST and results were entered into a statistical software program, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, 2007). Frequencies and means were calculated according to indicator variables (e.g., program structure, linkage to the day school, professional development). These results were triangulated with the qualitative data to help provide further evidence of "promising practices."

There was substantial variance in the response rates across the 53 programs and variation in the number of staff members (ranging from 70 to 233), parents (ranging from 154 to 1000), and day-school teachers (ranging from 62 to 150) who completed surveys. The end results and the distribution of response rates for the programs are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Survey Response Rate

Content area	Staff surveys	Parent surveys	Teacher surveys
Math	74	377	NA
Reading	233	1000	NA
Arts	82	254	62
Science	103	496	150
Technology	70	319	105
Homework	83	154	107
Total	**645**	**2600**	**424**

Descriptive statistics were used to present the frequencies and means of the survey responses. Exploratory factor analyses were conducted and constructs were extracted from the surveys as well as the APR/PPICS teacher surveys for the purposes of program validation. It is also important to note that some content areas may be underrepresented or heavily represented due to the varying response rate among the programs.

INTERNAL PROGRAM STRUCTURE

This section provides descriptions on the internal program structure of the 53 programs in this study, including details about program organizations, program governance and leadership, durations and frequencies of instructions, staff education and experiences, professional development opportunities, and program resources. The survey data were analyzed to capture commonalities and differences among the 53 programs, and to extract practices that appeared to align with quality afterschool programming.

Program Organization

Figure 3 illustrates survey responses from the staff's perspectives. Staff members were asked to rate their program's organization on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

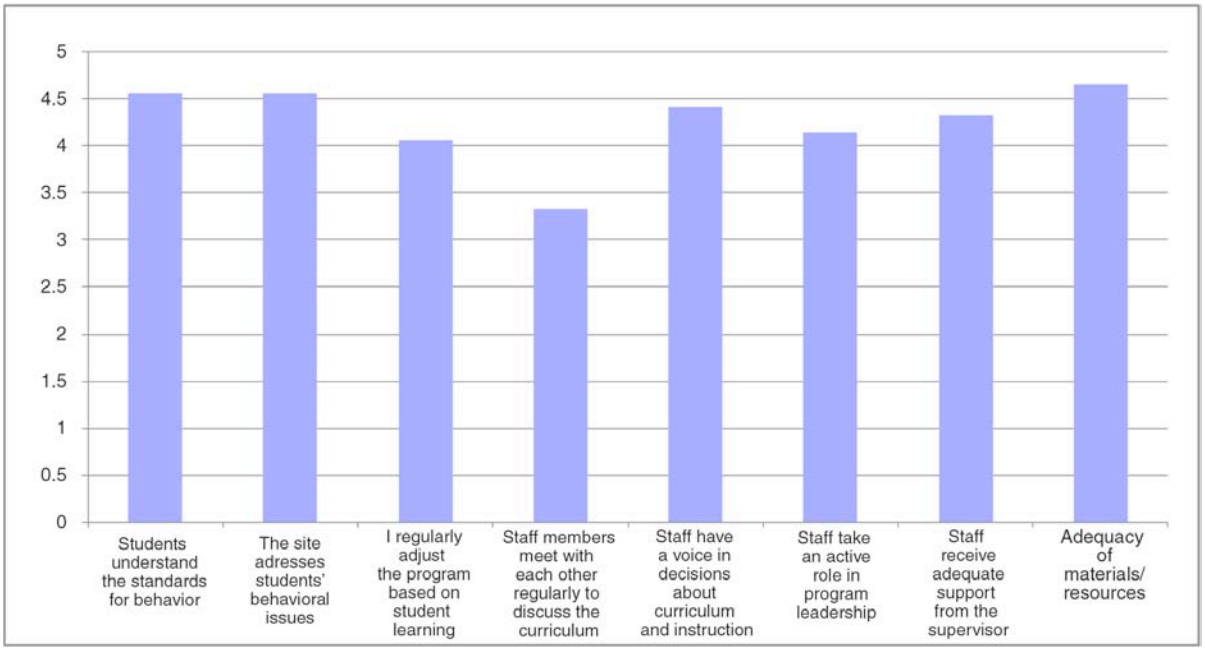


Figure 3. Program organization.

In general, the staff across all 53 programs offered high ratings for topics related to program organization. They expressed high levels of agreement with the following statements (mean level of agreement above 4.0): (a) students understand the standards for behavior; (b) programs address students' behavioral issues promptly; and (c) program has adequate materials and resources. Survey results also indicated that staff members felt they had a voice in curriculum development, and received adequate support from their supervisors. The lowest rating which was still quite high was that the staff members met with each other regularly to discuss the curriculum. Interview data further revealed that almost all programs conducted bi-weekly or monthly staff meetings, but meetings specifically focused on curriculum contents were conducted less often.

Student Discipline

Overall, there were minimal disciplinary issues for these programs and the majority emphasized that their students understand the program rules for behavior. Staff members reported that they agreed that students understood the standards for behavior (mean level of agreement = 4.4). Moreover, staff members on average strongly concurred to the statement that their site addressed student behavioral issues in a timely and consistent manner (mean level of agreement = 4.5). The site observation report supported these findings, and the site visit teams reported that the overall classroom climate in these programs was positive, staff-student relations were nurturing, staff and student expectations for success were high, and disciplinary concerns were minimal.

The degree of specificity described by programs regarding their approach to discipline varied somewhat. Some programs provided specific examples of behavior problems and how they would be addressed, whereas others provided fairly general descriptions of their disciplinary policy. Programs also varied in their level of adherence to the regular day-school discipline policy. Several programs adopted the same disciplinary system used by the day schools they served. Others seemed to believe that afterschool discipline policies should be slightly more lenient than the day-school policies, given the students' energy level and attention span after a full day of school. For instance, one afterschool art instructor stated that she encountered less behavioral problems than day-school teachers because her students responded better to the lenient atmosphere of the afterschool program.

Program Governance/Leadership

Afterschool programs are often characterized by the degree to which they adhere to a specific decision-making structure. Generally speaking, those with a centralized leadership style reserve the majority of the decision-making authority for upper management, whereas programs with a decentralized structure are more democratic, allowing and sometimes encouraging participation by a wider circle of stakeholders.

Across all 53 programs in the sample, survey data regarding decision-making processes consistently aligned with the interview data. The majority of both site coordinators and instructors at all programs indicated in their survey responses that afterschool instructors had an active voice in decisions about curriculum and instruction (mean level of agreement = 4.4), and took active roles in program leadership and decision-making (mean level of agreement = 4.1).

The amount of ownership instructors felt toward decision-making seemed to be related to the kind of program culture and expectations conveyed to them by site coordinators and project directors. Some site coordinators appeared to be stricter than others in maintaining their authority over the decisions made at their sites. But in the majority of cases, site coordinators and project directors acknowledged the importance of their instructors to the day-to-day operations, especially when they considered the instructors' familiarity with the students and their needs. Interviewees at most programs reported that instructors' input was highly valued and frequently determined the end result, as instructors were considered the "experts" in their content area. An instructor of an arts program explained,

> My experience has been that the afterschool teachers propose something that we'd like to do with the kids after school, and [the director] then just talks to us about what our plans are. We kind of report to her in terms of lesson plans and how we incorporate standards

> and benchmarks, but a lot of freedom is really given to us. We teach what we're comfortable teaching and what we're passionate about.

One site coordinator expressed appreciation for the staff by stating, "These are professional adults…and they are the best ones to implement the curriculum, because they see. They're with the students, right there with them, and they know what their levels are and what their abilities are."

In the case of programs where decision-making was characterized as decidedly decentralized or "democratic," administrators consistently described the value of staff's content-specific skills and expertise, and as a result, curriculum development was more of a group process in which staff members were given a great amount of leeway in designing instruction. A project director at a technology program clarified that the latitude his staff had was evenly balanced by a strong level of accountability for their curricular choices.

> Obviously, we try to be more democratic….So one of the things we try to do here, how we want to make this a great place to work, is in finding great people, then giving the people the power and leeway and the accountability, but also the freedom to do what they think works best, and trusting them….Every quarter they have to come back to us and tell us how they're doing. They report back as to what is going on at their…programs. In terms of actually decision-making and setting goals and deciding what we're going to do, that's much more of a bottom-up process.

Overall, data across programs indicated that whether decision-making regarding curricula design followed a top-down or a more collaborative model, it was very often guided by levels of expertise among staff members.

Opportunities for Practice

Miller (2003) states that successful afterschool programs provide activities that enable them to gain knowledge and to practice knowledge learned in school, as well as opportunities to reflect, make decisions, and solve problems. Similarly, the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice (2000) found that students need the opportunity to practice and develop their literacy skills through intelligent discussions with adults and peers, storytelling, reading and listening, games, and other activities.

Duration and Frequency of Instruction

The study examined the duration and frequency of instruction offered at the identified programs to ensure that students received substantial instruction time and opportunities to practice. Study findings revealed that majority of the programs reported offering three or

more activities each day. Most included some kind of homework help or tutoring as part of their programs, but other activities offered range from academic (e.g., math, reading, writing, science) to enrichment (e.g., arts and crafts, cooking, gardening, health and nutrition, cultural activities, computers) and recreation (e.g., sports, dance, drill team, outdoor games). The frequency and duration of instruction offered by the programs are provided in Table 6.

Table 6

Duration and Frequency of Instruction by Content Area

Content area	Average duration of daily instruction	Number of days offered per week
Reading	51 min.	3.20
Math	66 min.	2.58
Science	77 min.	2.28
Art	77 min.	3.72
Technology	105 min.	3.55
Homework	45 min.	4.00

As shown in Table 6, the duration of content specific instruction reported by interviewees varied from 45 minutes to a little over an hour per session. All programs offered their content-specific instruction at least two times a week. Homework programs reported having the least number of minutes (45 minutes) dedicated to homework assistance on a daily basis. However, these programs also offered homework help more frequently (4 days a week) than the other content areas. Technology programs reported having the most number of minutes (105 minutes) dedicated to activities using or teaching technology and offered technology instruction an average of nearly four times per week. Technology instruction was unique from the other content areas because, although it was often taught as a discreet course, it was also consistently integrated into other content areas. For example, the afterschool staff reported using technology on a regular basis for academic instruction, as well as during enrichment and recreation activities.

These findings suggest that students were receiving adequate exposure to the instructions and were given time to practice their skills. Site observation reports across the programs also indicate that students appeared to be mostly engaged and attentive, and enjoyed the activities.

Staff Education, Training, and Professional Development

Scott-Little, Hamann, and Jurs (2002) state that successful afterschool programs are characterized in part by having well-qualified and well-trained staff. Fashola (2002) notes, "Academic subjects taught during the afterschool period require qualified, preferably certified, instructors familiar with and who can be held accountable for student outcomes" (p. 60). Similarly, the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice (2000) believe that it is important to provide professional development to staff members to increase their ability to develop and implement developmentally appropriate curriculum, improve their skills in supporting and encouraging curiosity and exploration, support their function as role models, foster their ability to instill a healthy self-image in students, and to more generally attract and retain high-quality staff members.

Professional development can also give employees ideas for enrichment and hands-on activities; greater expertise in academic subject matter; knowledge in assessing student progress; and strategies for the different program components of academics, enrichment, and recreation. Staff education, professional development, and attitudes are thus important program features in afterschool settings.

Staff Experience and Education

Through interviews and surveys, site coordinators and instructors at the 53 programs in the study sample were asked about their overall experience with afterschool programs and their credentials to teach or administrate. Responses gathered from all of the content-specific programs were very similar. Of the 150 program staff members[8] for whom these data were available,[9] the majority (43%) had experience in afterschool for 3–5 years. In general, survey results were compatible with the interview data—although interview data tended to indicate slightly higher levels of staff experience. The results for instructor experience are displayed in Table 7.

[8] Number of instructors by content area: Reading (N = 30), Math (N = 21), Arts (N = 31), Science (N = 23), Technology (N = 26), and Homework (N = 19).

[9] Due to unknown reasons, not many of the site coordinators completed a survey; therefore survey data for only the instructors was examined for the programs.

Table 7

Staff Experience in Afterschool (*N* = 150)

Years of experience in afterschool	Instructors
Less than 1 year	13%
1–2 years	15%
3–5 years	43%
6–9 years	14%
10+ years	9%
Did not report	6%

In addition to overall experiences in afterschool programs, program staff members were asked about their experiences at the current site. The results indicated that at these programs, majority of the staff stayed over 3 years. Math and reading program staff members had an average of 3.5 years of experience at the current site. Approximately 75% of the science, technology, and arts program staff had between 1–7 years of services at the current site, with 46% of science, 42% of the arts, and 38% of the technology staff worked over 4 years at their current site. Homework programs had 60% of the staff members at the current site for 1–7 years and 30% from 4–7 years. Because staff stability is important for relationship building, especially for at-risk students, staff members can serve as constant figures and mentors in their lives. These relationships can provide the basis for students to build trust, character, and efficacy, which are all essential elements for good citizenship (Huang et al., 2007; Huang et al., 2006). Specific percentages for staff experiences at the current site are available in Appendix A.

Program staff members were also queried about their certifications. Of the 78 staff members[10] that responded, 52% reported some type of teaching certification or professional development (e.g., credential, Bachelor's or Master's degrees). Programs that were district affiliated responded that most or all of their staff members were certified teachers, often at the day school attended by afterschool students. At these programs, some also held additional credentials such as ESL, reading, math, or special education specialists. Community-based programs generally hired from the community; there were few certified teachers, staff members were typically community members or college students. These findings support the results from the staff instructor surveys.

[10] Number of instructors by content area: Reading (*N* = 8), Math (*N* = 11), Arts (*N* = 13), Science (*N* = 17), Technology (*N* = 15), and Homework (*N* = 14).

Figure 4 presents the staff survey responses regarding the educational background of the program instructors.

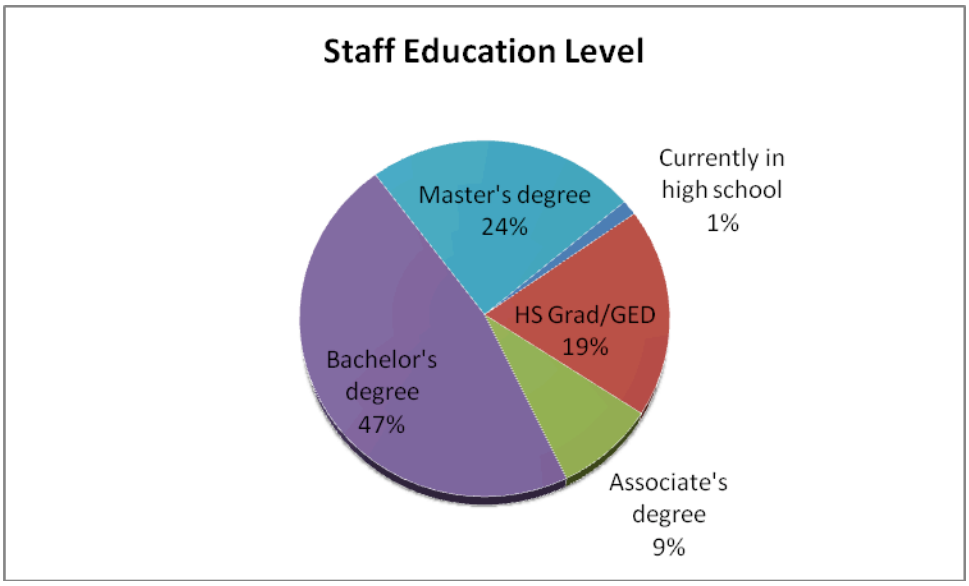


Figure 4. Instructor education Level 1.

To summarize, the majority of program staff reported having a Bachelor's degree (47%), and 24% had a Master's degree. In terms of content-specific areas, nearly 45% of the math and reading instructors reported having a Bachelor's degree, and approximately 20% had earned a Master's. Similarly, the majority of arts and science instructors also reported having a Bachelor's degree (34% and 56%, respectively), and 28% of the arts instructors and 36% of the science instructors reported having earned a Master's degree. In addition to a Bachelor's or Master's degree, 10% of arts instructors and 14% of science instructors also had obtained a teaching credential. As for technology and homework instructors, the majority of technology instructors received an Associate (46%) or a Master's (31%) degree while 23% had earned a Bachelor's degree. The majority of homework instructors received a Bachelor's (36%) or a Master's (28%) degree, while 16% of the homework instructors had also received a teaching credential.

Compare to the general afterschool field, the educational level of these afterschool staff are very high. This high level of education may have played a role in curriculum design and dissemination, which subsequently may have influenced students' academic outcomes.

Professional Development

The most common types of professional development offered across programs were general techniques in working with students, such as classroom management, discipline issues, social issues (e.g., cooperation or bullying), and general teaching strategies.

A few programs had professional development that was tailored to the specific needs of their student population. For instance, one program provided professional development on gang awareness/prevention, and a couple others focused on preparing staff to serve students with special behavioral needs such as ADHD, or academic needs related to second-language issues. Two science programs offered professional development on child abuse and poverty, some math and reading programs offered trainings on helping students in math and reading, and others had staff development for integrating technology and computers. Some programs also provided instructors with professional development on how to motivate and connect with students.

Although all interviewees reported having some sort of professional development available through their afterschool program, most program staff members received the bulk of any formal or semi-formal content-specific professional development through the day school or the district. More specifically, the district-affiliated programs generally encouraged staff to attend district professional development together with the regular day-school teachers. Among the six content areas, the technology program was the one that offered professional development to their staff consistently. While one technology program director reported offering extensive, rigorous, and regular technology professional development exclusively to afterschool staff (i.e., not affiliated with the day school or the district), staff at the majority of technology programs also supplemented staff development with self-sought or peer-to-peer technology professional development.

When opportunities were available and staff participated in the professional development, they generally found it useful. Instructors particularly appreciated professional development that was directly applicable in the classroom, relating to teaching strategies, innovative approaches and classroom management. As one program staff explained, “That’s the best part—that we can actually incorporate it. You don’t just learn it to say you know it, but to actually do it with students.”

Staff responses also indicated that professional development aided in practical knowledge that led to promotions. Some afterschool staff characterized professional development as a means of realizing long-term professional goals, as illustrated by one program staff,

> It has definitely been one of the most beneficial things that we have. I believe that it has helped our staff members grow as far as within the program and for their own development. Most of the staff members that I've worked with or that I've known usually want to become teachers and so this is a great stepping-stone for them.

Staff Participation in Professional Development

Although opportunities of professional development were offered to the program staff, they did not necessarily participate in it. Although 57% of the staff reported that their programs offered professional development two to four times a year (Table 8), only 26% participated in professional development two to four times a year. Sixty percent of the staff reported that they never participated in the professional development offered through their programs, and 14% reported that they participated once (Table 9). When we desegregated the data by content, the highest participation rate was from the technology instructors; 50% indicated that they had participated in professional development two or more times a year whereas 42% responded that they had never participated in professional development for technology instruction.

Table 8

Professional Development (Offered by Site)

Frequency	Percent
Never	18
Once	12
2–3 times	22
4 times or more	35
Don't Know	13

Table 9

Professional Development (Participated by Staff)

Frequency	Percent
Never	60
Once	14
2–3 times	17
4 times or more	9
Don't Know	0

While examining the data, a pattern emerged. Notably, project directors and site coordinators seemed to report higher frequencies of participation in professional developments than the program staff. There are two likely explanations for this incongruity: (a) Many project directors were not clear in differentiating the professional development that was offered to site coordinators and other members of upper management, as opposed to program staff at sites. (b) It also seemed that program staff had a more rigid definition of what counted as formal professional development, whereas many site coordinators counted weekly staff meetings as professional development. At the same time, it also appeared that site coordinators and staff in upper management generally received the majority of the off-site professional developments. The following Figure 5 illustrated an example from Year 1 reading and math.

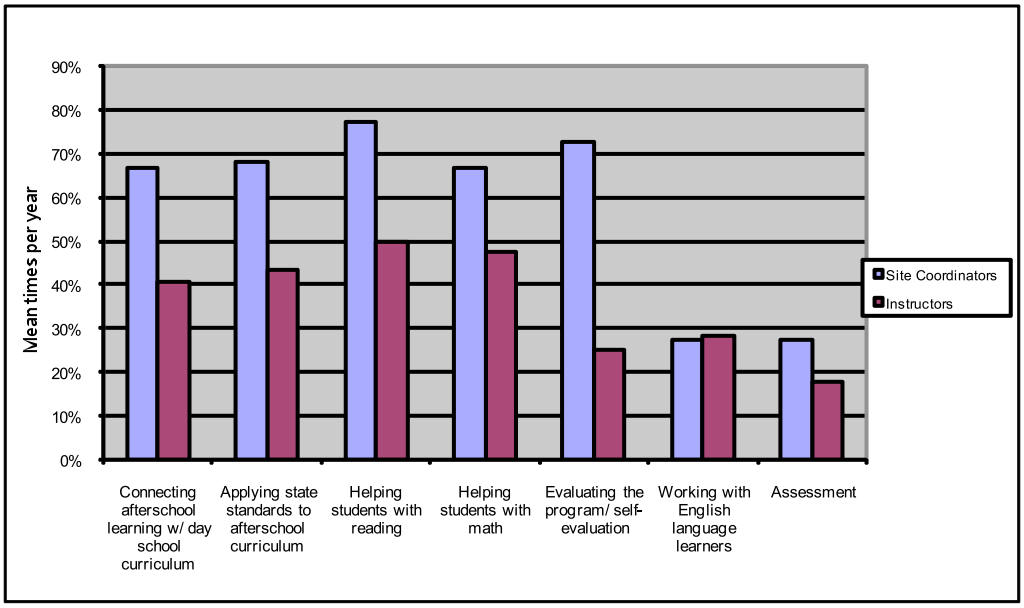


Figure 5. Types of professional development offered to math and reading grantees.

In Figure 5, similar to the interview findings, it is observed that a higher percentage of site coordinators reported receiving professional development in most categories (other than working with English language learners), and instructors reported receiving the lowest percentage of professional development in program and self-evaluation. Similar trends were observed for science. Due to the low return rate for site coordinator surveys, site coordinators' responses were not included in the analyses for arts, technology, and homework.

Variations in Professional Development According to Content Areas

The types of professional development offered at the afterschool programs also varied according to their content focus. Math and reading program instructors cited similar types of professional development offered at their afterschool programs (see Figure 5). Most professional development opportunities offered were on helping students with reading and math, applying state standards to the curriculum, and connecting with the day school. Fewer opportunities were offered on working with English learners, self-evaluation, and assessment.

Professional development specific to the arts ranged from an artists' retreat at which instructors could share their work and discuss best practices; dealing with conflict resolution and how it relates to the arts; to staff development on specific topics such as music, dance or paper-making. More specifically, the majority of art instructors (59%) indicated that they received professional development on helping students with art projects. It should be noted here that five out of the nine arts programs had local partnerships with arts studios and experts that served as instructors for these programs.

Over half of the staff interviewed at the nine science programs (69%, $N = 58$) reported that professional development was offered regularly at their sites. The types of professional development offered across programs focused mainly on coverage of science curriculum and instruction. Specific professional development sessions ranged from week-long science workshops to creative ways of exposing children to science through play and exploring; new ways of teaching different areas of science; and staff development on specific topics such as pollution and the environment, chemistry, and earthquakes.

The majority of the technology programs reported that implementing or maintaining regular professional development sessions was a goal of the program. All interviewees reported having some sort of technology-related professional development available through their afterschool program. However, it should be noted that at 6 of the 10 programs, staff received the bulk of any formal or semi-formal technology professional development through the day school or the district. Only one program director reported offering extensive, rigorous, and regular technology professional development exclusively to afterschool staff (i.e., not affiliated with the day school or the district). A majority of the staff also supplemented formal staff development with self-sought or peer-to-peer technology professional development. That is, a good number of interviewees sought professional development on their own (e.g., through conferences or online), and many also received technology instructions from more knowledgeable colleagues in the afterschool.

Meanwhile, about 50% of the homework program staff reported that no professional development was offered to them. Of those who received professional development, 28% of the program staff indicated that they received professional development on evaluating the program and self-evaluation. Twenty-two percent of the staff responded that they received professional development on connecting afterschool learning with day-school curriculum, and 20% of the staff reported receiving professional development in techniques for helping with homework.

Adequacy of Space and Resources

Program staff were asked about their needs in terms of resources (i.e., supplies, staff, space, etc.) in the afterschool program. Consistently across programs, a need for additional space was most commonly mentioned by both site coordinators and program staff. Many programs seemed to rely on access to common space, such as an auditorium or a classroom shared with day-school teachers, which often caused logistical problems and sometimes prevented planned activities from taking place. Furthermore, some programs expressed difficulty with not having consistent access to classrooms. A site coordinator illuminated the problem, "I would say physical space would be definitely a big thing with our program….That is probably one of the hardest things to work with just because every 6 weeks we are readjusting the classroom to new classroom seating charts, new areas in which the students can and cannot go." Additionally, several interviewees commented on the need for a separate office and storage space.

According to most programs, another scarce resource was access to technology and particularly computers. Although all the technology programs in this study indicated they have sufficient computers and tools to work with (it should be noted here that many technology programs were funded by, had a partnership with, or received support from technology companies such as Dell, Apple computer, etc.), other programs were frustrated by old equipment and a lack of current software. Although survey results indicated most of the programs have sufficient materials and supplies to work with, a few interviewees also requested more access to textbooks, literature, and general supplies. Site coordinators at a few programs also indicated that they would utilize additional funds they raised through fund raising and other activities not only to purchase supplies, but also to hire staff with expertise in the field of education or social work due to program popularity and growth.

Summary of Internal Program Structure

The internal program structure of these 53 programs followed a similar pattern. The staff in these programs came with 3–5 years of afterschool experiences, and had lower

turnover rates with an average of 3.5 years working at their current sites. Most of them also came with either a Bachelor's or Master's degree, especially for the science, arts, and technology programs. These high levels of education may be attributed to the fact that arts, science, and technology are much more content specific, and these instructors may have pursued this as their area of professional interest.

In general, all programs offered professional development at least once or twice a year but staff participation was low. For example, 35% of the afterschool staff reported their program offered professional development over four times a year, but only 9% of the staff participated in these professional development four or more times a year. Over 58% of the staff indicated they never participated in professional development offered by the program; and 32% reported they rarely participated. Technology programs had the highest participation rate, with majority of the technology programs emphasizing the importance of following the recent developments in technology.

All programs provided initial professional development on student discipline and classroom management. School district related programs tend to provide greater opportunities and varieties for professional development, having the afterschool staff participate in the professional development together with the day-school teachers, and the participation rate is generally higher. When the program staff participated in the professional development, they generally reported that it was useful, especially when the professional development sessions were directly applicable to the afterschool classrooms.

As for program organization, the programs were generally well managed, usually under strong leaders who were able to articulate a clear program mission and vision statement and goals, and to empower and motivate the staff to achieve the program objectives. The students appeared to understand the codes of conduct for behavior; when necessary the programs address students' behavioral issues promptly. These programs also had adequate materials and resources.

In these programs, staff felt they had a voice in curriculum development, and they received adequate support from their supervisors. In a majority of the cases, site coordinators and project directors acknowledged the importance of their program staff to the day-to-day operations, especially when they considered the program staff's familiarity with the students and their needs. This trusting relationship empowered the staff to set high expectations to their students and developed efficacy in their instructional activities. The team culture that existed in most of these programs indicated that positive relationships and communication among the afterschool staff appeared to enhance their ability to expand their roles; and the

frequent interaction among program staff also appeared to have a positive impact in fostering problem solving, thus decreasing the level of assistance sought from the site coordinator.

As for scheduling, the duration of content specific instruction reported by interviewees varied from 45 minutes to an hour and 45 minutes per session. All programs offered their content-specific instruction at least two times a week. Technology programs reported having the most number of minutes (105 minutes) dedicated to activities using or teaching technology and offered technology instruction an average of nearly four times per week. Technology instruction was unique from the other content areas because, although it was often taught as a discreet course, it was also consistently integrated into other content areas. For example, afterschool staff reported using technology on a regular basis for instruction in academic content areas (e.g., math, reading, writing, science), as well as enrichment (e.g., arts and crafts, cooking, computers) and recreation (e.g., sports, dance, outdoor games). These findings suggested that students were receiving adequate exposure to the instructions and were given time to practice their skills. Site observation reports also indicated that across the programs, students appeared to be mostly engaged, attentive, and enjoying the activities.

PROGRAM PROCESS

This section provides an overview of the process for program implementation at the 53 programs. Descriptive findings on parent participation, connecting with the community, staff–student interaction, and student engagement in terms of opportunities for practice, social development, and motivational support are included in the following sections.

Parent Involvement

According to the literature, parent involvement is one essential indicator in external connection and support for exemplary practices in afterschool programs. Site coordinators in the study sample were inquired in interviews and surveys about their perceptions of parental involvement in the afterschool programs. Distinct themes emerged across both survey and interview data for all 53 programs, with very few exceptions or variations.

Most programs shared similar methods of disseminating information to parents, as well as means of encouraging their involvement in the afterschool programs. However, despite great efforts in these areas, almost all programs showed evidence of fairly low parent participation or volunteerism, as well as low percentages of formal parent–teacher meetings, given that most of the programs also did not have a formal structure in place for scheduling regular meetings with parents. More details are provided in the following sections.

Sharing Information and Promoting Participation

Site coordinators and program staff across all 53 programs consistently offered a broad range of means by which they shared program and student progress information with parents. Some of the most frequently cited means of communication were: monthly/bimonthly newsletters; pre-academic year orientation; parents' nights; community outreach activities such as potlucks and student performances; afterschool nights throughout the academic year; letters, notes and phone calls home as necessary regarding student progress, attendance, or behavioral issues; and scheduled meetings with site coordinators or program staff as necessary.

Figures 6 shows survey results indicating parents' perceptions of program efforts to share information and promote participation. Overall, responses indicated that parents felt the programs made an effort to keep them abreast of program rules and practices, and to encourage their participation. About 20% of parents indicated that the program never invited them to volunteer in the afterschool program, but nearly 40% indicated that they were invited to volunteer at least once a month. About 35% of the parents surveyed stated that their children's afterschool programs provided program information in their home language at least once a month.

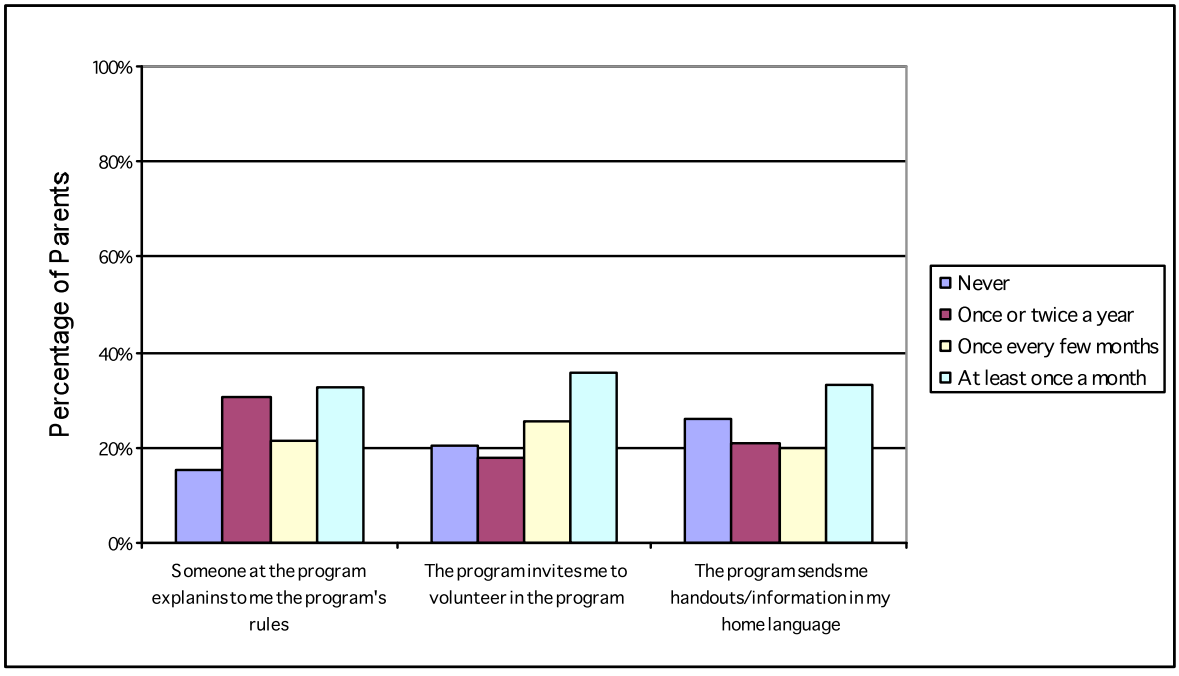


Figure 6. Parent awareness of the afterschool program.

Similarly, over half of the programs mentioned in interviews that all parents were encouraged to volunteer at their sites in some capacity (e.g., in the classroom, on field trips, chaperoning events), and a few sites also mentioned offering weekend parent workshops (e.g., crafts, cooking, ESL, or GED courses). Despite these efforts, estimated percentages of actual parent involvement were extremely low or nonexistent across the programs. The great majority of interviewees acknowledged that although they encouraged parent participation in their program, volunteerism was extremely low. The key reason appeared to be that they predominantly served families where both parents worked and thus were unavailable to afterschool activities on a regular basis, if at all. As one program staff at a homework program explained,

> A lot of them [parents] are interested to know what's going on…but as far as coming in and checking it out, it is a very small percentage. They do get the newsletters and the calendars so they do know what we're up to. Most parents [however] are working at that time; so it makes it hard for them.

Parent survey results, as shown in Figure 7, confirmed that the frequency of parent participation was low across all programs.

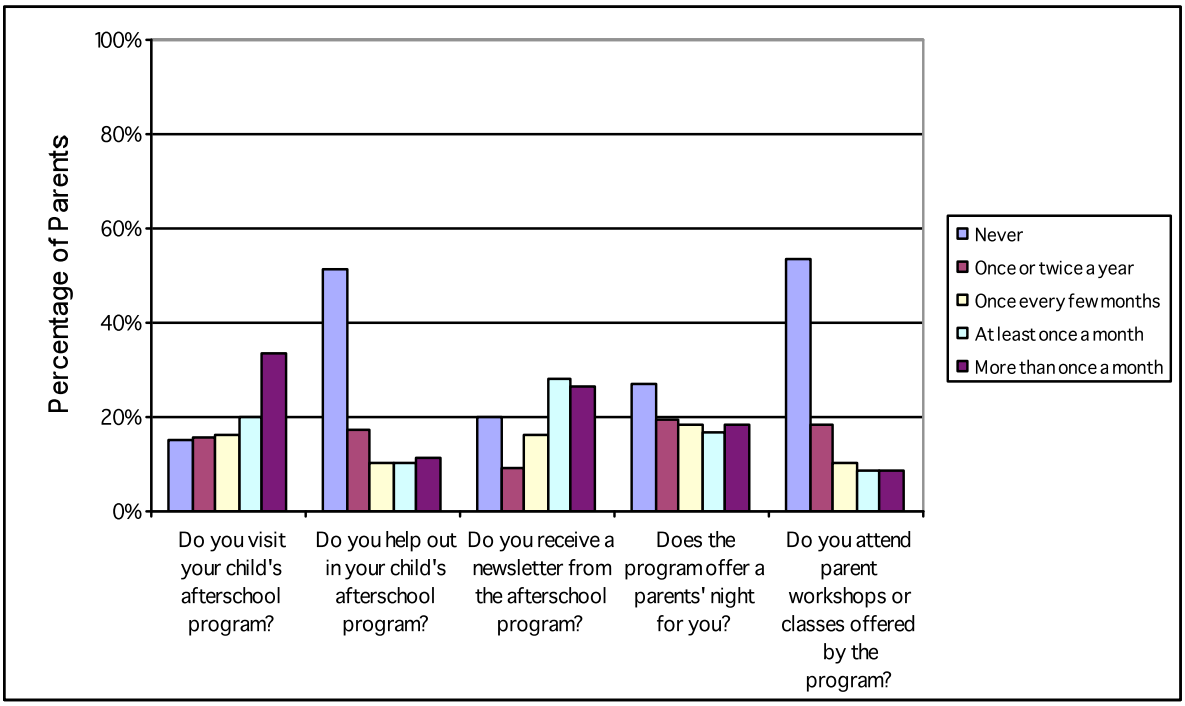


Figure 7. Parent involvement at the 53 programs.

Over half of the parents reported receiving frequent, once a month or more, newsletters from their children's afterschool programs. However, just over half of parents stated that they never help out at their children's afterschool programs; and the same percentage reported a failure to attend parent workshops or classes offered by the program.

Parent Meetings

Survey results also suggested that afterschool staff did not meet with parents on a regular basis. As shown in Figure 8, afterschool staff across the programs reported infrequent meetings with parents. Almost 50% of the staff said that they never or rarely had formal meetings with the parents, only 19% of staff meets with parents on a regular basis.

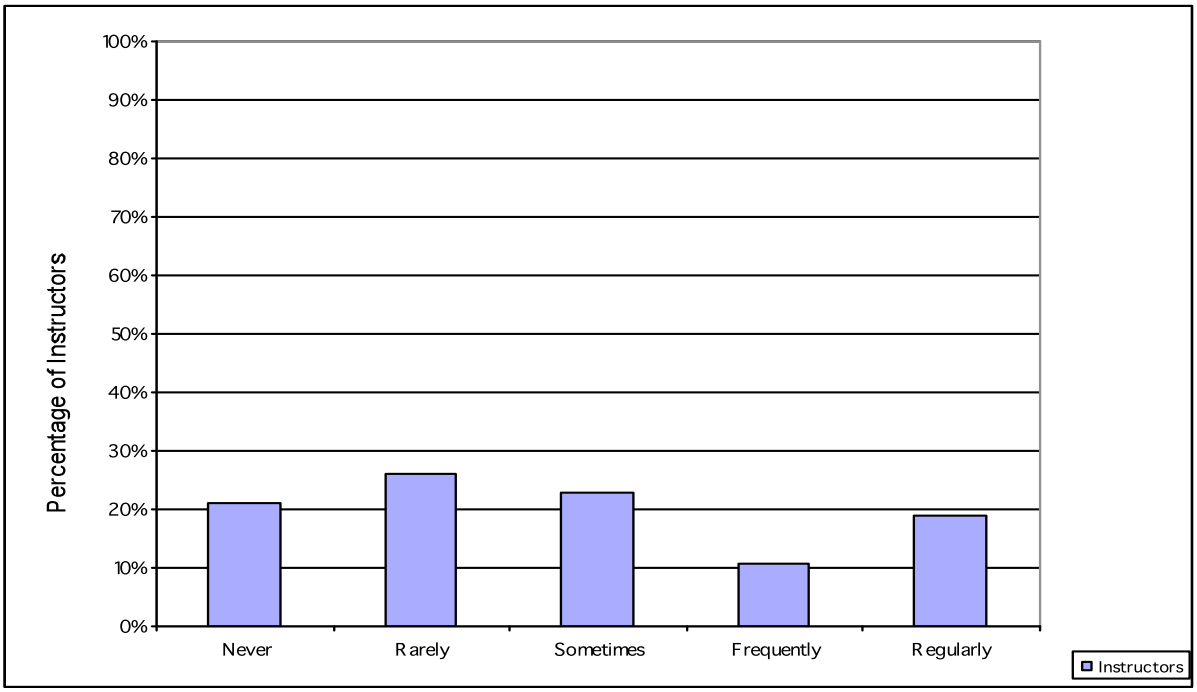


Figure 8. Frequencies of parent meetings at the 53 programs.

Interview responses regarding formal parent meetings with afterschool staff indicated a similarly low occurrence. Although some programs had a formal parent meeting scheduled at the onset of the school year (typically a group orientation rather than a one-on-one meeting), a significant number of afterschool staff stated that they rarely, if ever, met formally with parents. However, almost all staff in the 53 sites mentioned that they frequently took the opportunity to speak and discuss student issues with the parents when they picked up their children in the evenings.

Parent Perception of the Program

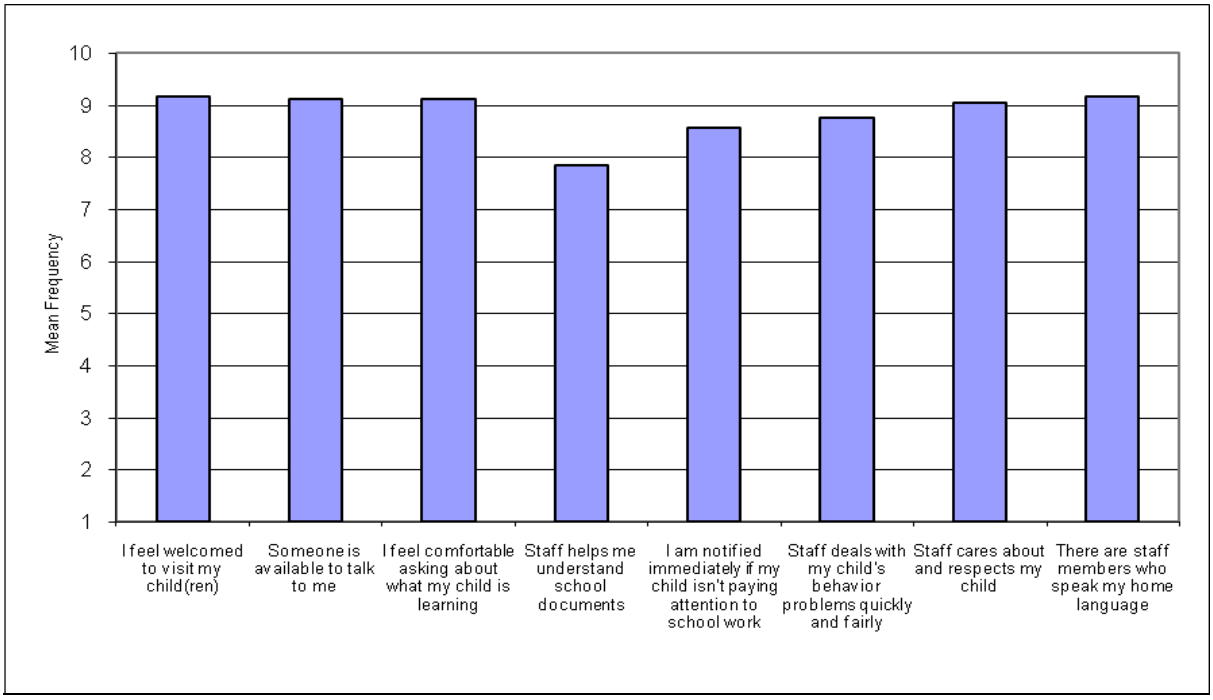


Figure 9. Parent perception of the program.

Although formal meetings and involvement with parents were rare, the parents' perceptions of the program were very high. Ratings were based on a 10-point Likert scale 1(*never*) to 10 (*always*). Parents indicated that they felt welcome to visit their children's afterschool programs at any time, and that there were staff members available to speak to them in their home language. They felt comfortable talking about program materials, and felt that the staff cared about and respected their children. They also reported that afterschool staff dealt with their children's behavioral problems promptly, and that they were notified in a timely manner if their children were not paying attention.

Interestingly, a pattern of progressively increasing parent satisfaction emerged over the 3 years. It should be noted that only quantitative data that were uniform across all six content areas were examined. Averages for each year were calculated and then compared across the 3 years. As illustrated in Figure 10, it appeared that parents felt progressively more satisfied with their children's afterschool program over the 3 years. There was a small increase from Year 1 to Year 2, and a higher increase in Year 3 on all four ratings. In reading this table, one should bear in mind that the content areas under study were different in these 3 years. This heightened satisfaction could be a result of: content focus, time, or improvement in afterschool functioning, or any combination of such.

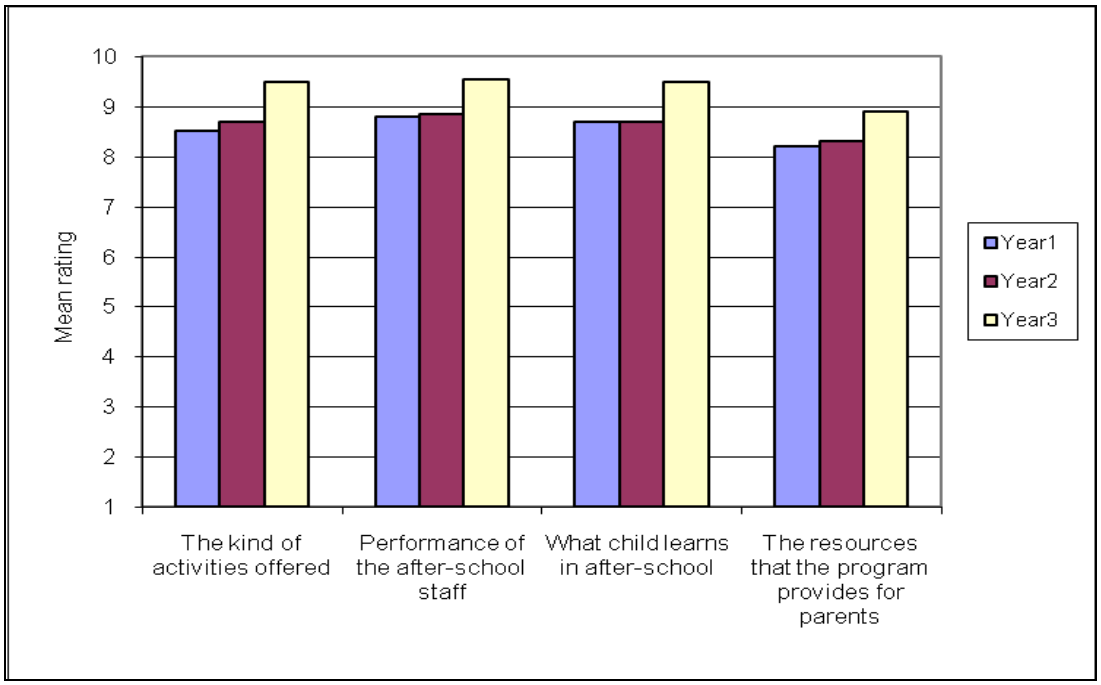


Figure 10. Parent's satisfaction w/ their child's afterschool program.

Connecting with the Community

Many of the 53 programs mentioned ways in which they connected with the community. The activities most frequently mentioned were through service learning, such as making get well cards for or reading to patients in the hospitals, taking trips to nursing homes to sing to the senior citizens, recycling or community beautification efforts, and cultivating community gardens. One afterschool program worked with a local charitable organization not only to restore a public garden, but also hike, take horticulture classes, go rowing, and swimming in the lake. An instructor at another site described a local shopping campaign that entailed giving kids a budget and bringing local storeowners into the school to set up a mini version of the economy; and another instructor at the same site had a pet store owner come to the school and build an entire mock ecosystem within the building to teach kids about biology and conservation.

Another way in which the community was involved in the afterschool programs was through resources. Most staff members reported benefiting from various types of support and involvement from the local community. A broad range of community connections that served to enhance learning was reported. Benefits from these partnerships were especially valuable for arts, science and technology programs where supplies can be costly. For instance some art programs benefited from donated materials and supplies, funding, arts-related outings, and artists-in-residence programming.

Many programs also reported getting volunteers as a result of their affiliations with local universities and high schools. Other programs get volunteers from community organizations such as Boys/Girls scouts, churches, and boys and girls clubs. For instance, in homework help programs many of the staff mentioned that volunteers from local universities and colleges were able to get involved in tutoring students. Furthermore, afterschool program staff also frequently invited science experts from the community to visit their program to offer students a more tangible experience of practical, real-world applications for science. As one project director explained,

> What makes it unique at [our program] is we have so much community involvement in teaching science…We've really tried to get experts in the field to come in…I don't think that there is any program that has more community involvement in teaching students science than ours.

The importance of bringing community members into the program was echoed by a site coordinator from an art afterschool program:

> That's the beautiful thing about coordinating the afterschool program. My job is really to find these community-based organizations and individuals that that's their passion. That's what they like to do, whether it's art or drawing, cartooning, dancing, singing, whatever it is. You're actually bringing in people in the community that really enjoy what they do and want to teach that to kids.

By bringing community members and resources into afterschool programs, students are provided with opportunities to explore interests, identify role models, and become more immersed in their community. From the varied ways in which afterschool programs enrich their students' learning experience, it appears that afterschool programs have a strong commitment to providing enrichment activities to strengthen students' self-concept, character, creativity, and community immersion.

Relationship Building with the Students

Afterschool literatures continue to emphasize the importance of the contribution of high staff expectations and positive attitudes toward students to the quality of the program environment and student achievement. Hall, Yohalem, Tolman, and Wilson (2003) state, "The staff of effective afterschool programs intentionally create a culture of high expectations that affirms the potential of each participant and communicates clear expectations and standards concerning participation and behavior…high expectations combined with opportunities to meet those expectations leads to increased motivation and engagement." This study examined the quality of staff-student interactions in the 53

programs. The site observation field notes and reports indicated that positive relationships and interactions between the staff and the students were observed in all of the 53 programs, particularly in terms of expectations for student performance, disciplinary issues, and democracy.

Expectations for Students

Program staff were inquired about their expectations for students' performance. Although none of the programs responded that their expectations were low, they did differ in the ways they framed their expectations. For example, about a third of the programs responded that they wanted the students to be performing at grade level or better; and nearly one-fourth of programs mentioned wanting students to do their best in academic performances. Science and arts programs distinctly expected their students to gain exposure and engage in science and arts experiences, whereas technology programs expected their students to use technology as a means for continuous learning in different life experiences.

Democracy in the Classroom

Although most programs were not designed to gather student feedback or give students many choices, especially the reading, math, and homework help programs; staff from these programs enhanced students' sense of democracy by taking their interests into account when making decisions on program activities. For example, one program allowed students to offer input on where they would like to conduct their service learning projects; others considered students' activities choices, at one site, students were given the option between reading and doing homework.

Perhaps due to the context of the different subject focus: arts, science, and technology programs placed a heavier emphasis on students' autonomy. As an example, an arts program staff stated that student inputs are of great value; hence, student interests had a vast impact on art curriculum content. These kinds of autonomy help students in taking ownership in their learning process and help to keep them engaged.

Motivational Support: Engaging the Students

In addition to positive relationships, motivational support is important in supporting students' academic achievement (Bempechat, Graham, & Jiminez, 1999; Ryan & Grolnick, 1986). Rossi and Montgomery (1994) states that increases in student academic engagement are associated with quality resources, as well as the pressure or incentives for students to invest in academic achievement. Miller (2003) states that students may be motivated by personal interest in a topic, the desire to please a teacher, peers, parents, and other adults, the

knowledge that success has long-term rewards, and a desire to increase a sense of their own capabilities. Analyses revealed that a variety of motivational strategies were implemented at the 53 programs in the study sample. Researchers noted that a variety of motivational strategies were implemented at the 53 programs in the study sample.

Making Learning Fun

The majority of programs employed unique and innovative strategies to engage students in the afterschool setting, placing a particular emphasis on making learning fun. The primary reason given for this approach was the need to maintain interest after a long day at school. As one instructor aptly stated "Afterschool should simultaneously be fun and informative." To accomplish this, a number of strategies were used including cross-content integration, diversity of activities, real world examples, dialogic and cooperative learning, culturally significant programming, special consideration for the students' activity preferences and the incorporation of enrichment and recreational activities. Intentional or "disguised" learning was also popular with sports, games, discussions, and journal writing; and were used to engage learners while pushing learning into the background. A site coordinator explained the approach:

> I think that because a lot of our program is disguised learning, a lot of times the kids don't even realize that they are doing math or that they are doing language arts or reading. So, in essence, we have them already developing a lot of social skills. During our "Why Be Healthy?" time, for example, when they are competing against other schools, they are learning team sports and character traits that are appropriate for youth.

Breaking up the Day

Diversity in activities was one key way the various programs maintained interest among their students. The daily schedule generally comprised a combination of homework help and tutoring, academics, and some enrichment and/or recreational activity. Most programs had short periods of 30 minutes to an hour per activity, and a few used learning or activity centers that allowed children to move from one activity to the next at their own pace.

Real World Examples

Programs also tried to engage students by offering real world examples that connected the curriculum to their lives outside of school. This was particularly salient among science and technology programs; across these programs, hands-on activities with real-world connections were the most popular instructional strategies. Over half of the technology programs reported engaging students in authentic, real-world, relevant activities; these activities frequently led to the development of marketable and applied skills. For example,

some technology sites trained students to use software programs to produce music or graphic design. Additionally, many science instructors reported inviting science experts to discuss real-world applications of science. The math programs also created activities that related to everyday life experiences like banking, shopping, and budgeting. As one site coordinator stated, “We use things like BMX bikes or other things that interest them.” Overall, most of the staff expressed a desire to further engage students by using relevant and real world examples. They also accomplished this goal by referring to local places, familiar activities, and known individuals.

Current Events

Programs attempted to make content more relevant by tying it to current events. A few sites indicated the use of newspapers and magazines in class, others mentioned studying popular culture like hip-hop and movies, some sites studied popular gadgets, and several sites used television as the starting point for an educational activity. Overall, popular culture references were readily utilized; on the other hand, national and world news events were rarely mentioned. A math instructor highlighted her use of current events:

> When we have reading I like to use, especially on Thursdays when we do current events, the daily newspaper from town. I usually pick the story, but a lot of times I let them pick an interesting one. The last one we did was a big article about the presidential race. So we tied that into math.

Providing Opportunities for Social Development

Social development was emphasized in varying degrees at all programs, and positive socialization was generally observed among the students. When asked about program goals, about half of the staff members mentioned social development, and overall, student-to-student interactions at the 53 programs appeared to be positive, nurturing, and respectful. A site coordinator highlighted the way that all activities are related to social development: I don’t think that there’s anything we do that in some way doesn’t impact either their image of themselves or how they interact with the world.

Many strategies were used to enhance social development; the most commonly reported strategies included the use of group activities, multi-age groupings, rewarding pro-social behaviors, and encouraging peer collaboration. One of the strategies employed to promote social development are through the enrichment activities. Some examples of enrichments offered included: arts activities, field trips, sports, and character building workshops.

Art Activities

Almost all afterschool programs offered arts activities for their students as an enrichment including poetry, dance, drama, choir, and drawing. One program instituted an innovative program, "Fun with Junk," where kids created art projects out of recyclables. Other sites put on drama, dancing, or singing productions for fellow students, teachers, and parents, thus providing opportunities for students to work with and collaborate with each other.

Character-Building Programs

Many of the 53 programs mentioned providing additional program curriculum that was geared toward supporting students' social development, increasing their self-esteem, and creating positive self-images. The site coordinator at a reading afterschool program described two programs that they offered for their students: "The girls get Smart Girls, which is also character building, but it deals with those life changes during puberty, taking care of your body in terms of hygiene, and what does it mean to be a woman in society. Same thing for men, for the boys it's Passport to Manhood." Another site coordinator for a math afterschool program also mentioned a program called Character Development, which focused on teaching students values such as "honesty, respect, responsibility, and caring."

Field Trips

Field trips were yet another method used to engage learners and provide real world links to the afterschool program subjects. Over half of the programs mentioned taking students on field trips. Parents were encouraged to volunteer for field trips; hence the benefits were threefold: enhancing education by providing concrete experiences; providing social development opportunities as students engaged in planning and discussions of the events; and furthering parent involvement. Math and reading programs generally visited museums, zoos, libraries and fire stations. Moreover, several programs reported taking students to local festivities such as pep-rallies. Art programs, generally, opted for museums and art exhibitions, for instance as one art program instructor explained:

> Our program offers a field trip, for example to the Getty [museum], and most of my kids will go on that trip. And that's a really nice time in the sense that we're introducing the arts to them. We visualize, and then they have these field trips that correlate it together and reinforce what we're doing in class.

Furthermore, some art programs arranged for a more interactive field trip experience, for instance, according to a site coordinator at an art program, students were bused to "the Tucson Symphony Orchestra had sort of collaborated and the kids would do field trips into

their facility and would actually pair up with a musician." Science and technology programs favored field trips that supplemented their curriculum such as science museums and technology centers. For instance, students at one science program were taken on a field trip to Lockheed Martin: a leading multinational aerospace manufacturer and advanced technology company.

Summary

In summary, most parent–staff communication was informal and occurred during pick-up time, programs also made use of written forms of communication such as newsletters to share information with parents. Parent involvement across the programs was generally low. However, they felt that the program did a satisfactory job in keeping them up-to-date with program rules and practices; their children were well taken care of, and any disciplinary issues were dealt with efficiently and fairly.

With some exceptions, community involvement was not particularly strong at these programs. For math, reading, and homework, community involvement generally consisted of service learning opportunities, volunteers recruited from the community, and students participated in community events such as paper recycle, beach cleaning, etc. Arts, science, and technology programs appeared to have more in-depth collaborations with their community through sharing resources, both in materials and in expertise (e.g., arts residence programs assigned artists to the afterschool program for a period of time to work with the students, Dell computer brought in materials, lesson plans, and technology assistance to the afterschool program, and local museums sent scientists to deliver a project with the students, etc). Some of them also collaborate with local colleges and universities.

Staff–student relationships were characterized by warmth and mutual respect throughout the 53 programs. Almost all programs wanted the students to improve both academically and socially. In building relationships with students, staff in these programs expressed high expectations to their students; provided democracy in the classroom so that students have a voice and feel empowered; rules were made fairly and observed consistently; some programs also provided character building programs; and all programs provide motivational support and desired to engage their students through activities. Consequently, minimal disciplinary issues were observed or reported.

Social development was also an important goal to most sites. Staff employed techniques such as peer collaboration, different grouping arrangements, and cooperative learning opportunities to realize this goal. According to field notes, most student-to-student relationships observed at sites were positive. To facilitate learning, student motivation and

engagement, programs utilized five major techniques. First, they tried to make learning fun; the staff accomplished this goal by including recreational activities and disguised learning. Second, the staff broke up the day, and as a result students enjoyed a diverse set of activities. Third, the staff used real world and relevant examples to teach the curriculum. Fourth, many instructors discussed current events, for example some instructors referred to popular culture and events. Finally, about half of programs made use of field trips, student performances, and exhibitions to advance learning.

GOAL SETTING AND CURRICULAR PRACTICES

This section presents the findings focused on goal setting and curricular practices. Four thematic areas will be discussed including setting of program goals, standards-based curriculum, links to day school, research-based curriculum and instructional practices within specific content areas.

Goal-Oriented Programs

Through a meta-analysis of the literature, Bodilly and Beckett (2005) found that the setting of clear goals and desired outcomes is essential for program success. More specifically, the structure and design of afterschool programs should be guided by the purposes of the program. This section will discuss how the afterschool programs aligned activities to meet program goals.

Aligning Strategic Plans to Achieve Goals

In terms of aligning program activities to goals, all 53 programs appeared to be able to structure their curricular design and program practices to facilitate meeting their program goals. For example, three of the math programs and four of the reading programs specifically targeted students who were struggling academically. The site coordinator at a math program described their program goals as focused on developing students' academic skills within the math content area:

> Our primary goals are to bring the student to grade level. That's my primary goal and covering the basics of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

Programs with achievement goals like the earlier mentioned are often district-affiliated, they generally ran a more structured program, stressing the improvement of academic performance, hiring more certified teachers, and maintaining a more consistent linkage with the day school (in terms of curriculum coordination, communication, and adherence to state standards). They used motivational strategies to maintain a high degree of student engagement, motivation, and parent satisfaction.

At the same time, a few reading programs exhibited a strong commitment to their community. One collaborated with the YMCA and had strong ties with their community; another stressed building citizenship through apprenticeship. To achieve their program goals of linking with the community, these programs recruited staff members from the community and had activities that connected students with their neighborhoods and communities through service learning, field trips, and other activities beyond the classroom instructions.

Slightly different from math and reading, the majority of the arts programs had a different focus. Their common goal was to provide students, who otherwise would have little to no exposure to the arts, with art experiences. Program staff, both instructors and administrators alike, frequently noted that although the afterschool curricula attended to the need for academic achievement and progress, arts instruction could also serve as a means to encourage creativity and discovery through expression—something most of their students had very little experience with due to recent school cut backs and financial short fall. As one site coordinator explained

> These are kids that have never been exposed to anything—I mean really nothing…[our goal is to] open the kids' minds to new things, and to show that they can do it….We wanted a well-balanced, well-rounded program with a lot of different things to offer to the children, to open their minds.

A number of interviewees further suggested that by using an integrative approach to arts instruction in afterschool programs they could potentially impact students who were struggling academically and personally.

Similar to arts, all science staff responded to questions about curricular goals by suggesting a primary interest in simply offering positive science experiences to students. As one executive director remarked, "[Our] primary goal…is to awaken in students a curiosity about science and the world around them." Beyond this basic theme, a smaller percentage (just over 20%) of interviewees across science programs characterized their curricula as mostly focused on academic improvement and achievement. Most of these respondents reported that they considered their programs to be an opportunity to extend science projects and labs from the day school to afterschool, as was the case of one site coordinator who remarked, "We're growing on what they're teaching [in the day school], trying to enrich those areas." A few went even further to explain that their principle goal was to improve standardized test scores in science by focusing on extending day-school instruction into afterschool. One academic coordinator described designing afterschool science curricula with a strong academic focus in order to "bring students up to par for standardized testing."

Technology programs appeared to have their main focus on developing students' applied knowledge. Nearly all of the technology staff interviewed reflected the goal of teaching students the mechanics of a broad range of technology skills, in the interest of encouraging the students to use those skills to enhance learning in other content areas; and teaching the students a technical skill that can be relevant to their real lives, both now and in the future.

Only one technology program mentioned academic achievement as their primary focus. In this program, integrating technology into other content areas "to improve reading and math scores" was the primary goal, whereas staff across the other nine programs consistently explained that academics were just a piece of the puzzle, and development of skills in technology could serve their students on multiple levels. One project director explained that, by showing students that learning through technology can be interesting and relevant to their lives, the program could positively impact students' futures far beyond elementary and high school experiences.

> Everything that we do in afterschool, we try to make it somehow connected to the real world….That's one of our many goals is to make it relevant, that everything we do be relevant…to perhaps make a connection for them for a reason for staying in school, a reason to go to college, a reason to be on a particular career path; and if technology is what fascinates them then that's what we will use.

Interview data across the seven homework programs suggested that the primary goals in afterschool homework help were to complete homework and increase academic achievement. Many staff members reported that assisting the students to understand their homework as well as increasing motivation to complete homework was important to achieve their goals.

> We recognized that the other role we have to play is to get children engaged in the learning process. So it's not just about completing the homework, but it's about finding ways outside of the school to get them interested, excited, feeling confident, and to build their self-esteem so that even if they only do a third of the homework that they feel good about it, and they want to come back the next day and try a little harder. That's giving them some sense of motivation.

In aligning activities to achieve their program goals, nearly all interviewees described the merits of developing a curriculum that combined academic skill development with opportunities to explore, and encouraging students' social development. One program director summed up well in saying,

> Our goal is to help each child to make sure that it's an afterschool program that's fun, but at the same time it's enriching, so they grow and learn every day, so they can take home some more knowledge…

Standards-based Curriculum

Through interviews with site coordinators and program staff, questions were asked related to their familiarity with their states' content standards, the ways in which the curriculum is linked to the standards, and how coverage occurred. Additionally, program staff were asked to explain which specific standards were covered in a lesson observed during the site visits. Overall, interviews revealed that most programs appear to be incorporating state standards into their curriculum. This occurred across programs to varying degrees with some knowledge about, and purposeful in, delivering a standards-based curriculum, whereas others appeared to make it a secondary, or less intentional goal. This section will discuss staff familiarity with standards, and the ways that standards are linked to instruction.

Familiarity with the standards. Most program staff reported that they were familiar with the state standards, although levels of familiarity seemed to vary. Some program staff and site coordinators stated that they had a strong knowledge of the standards, often because they were also day-school teachers, or because their program built on the day-school's curricular structure. In about half of the programs, especially those that are community-based, one or more of the interviewees responded that they were not very familiar with the state standards. In most of these cases, interviewees further explained that they had some familiarity, or knew where they could find the standards. Also, in a few cases, respondents remarked that although they did not know the standards, they were aware that the afterschool curriculum that they employed was tied to them.

Similarly, a few of the program staff were able to give detailed explanations of how standards-based contents were integrated into their afterschool curriculum. One program staff spoke of the ways in which she embedded standards into her instruction:

> What we do is we break down the standards and make sure we fine-tune every standard. I just make sure that every word [of] what I'm teaching is a standard. I look in my book, and if the standard is not taught fully, I go to a different text or resource that will meet that standard.

whereas other program staff had more general views of standards-based curriculum, for example, a site coordinator at a math program had a more general idea of how standards were addressed by their afterschool curriculum:

> We mainly come up with [curriculum] from general standards of what students should be working on, when they are in kindergarten or when they are in first grade. We take that information and a combination of what they are working on during the school day. So, we get information from the day-school teachers whether it's weekly or if it's monthly, "My students are working on X, Y and Z this month in math." Then [afterschool] teachers create fun games and activities like that during that time. So, they might have a bingo game that's multiplication or some other thing.

The survey responses supported the qualitative findings. A different rating scale was used in Year 1 for reading and math programs; the staff were asked to rate their familiarity with state standards on a scale of 1 to 10 whereas the science, art, and technology programs were asked to rate their familiarity with state standards on a scale of 1 to 5. A higher score indicates greater familiarity with state standards. In general, it appears that math site coordinators were the most familiar, and technology staff were the least familiar. Both Tables 10 and 11 display afterschool staff ratings of their familiarity with state standards in their focus content area. Because there are no homework content standards, homework programs were not included for this item.

Table 10

Mean Rating of Familiarity with State Standards

Programs	Site coordinators Scale 1–10	Program staff
Reading programs	8.79	8.30
Math programs	9.5	8.24

Table 11

Mean Rating of Familiarity with State Standards

Programs	Site coordinators Scale 1–5	Program staff
Science programs	4.25	4.38
Art programs	N/A	3.95
Technology programs	N/A	3.13

For the technology programs, the survey results indicated a moderate level of familiarity with the technology standards. However, a common theme emerged; although most staff rated their own knowledge of technology standards at the weak to moderate level,

the majority of interviewees (technology staff) went on to describe activities or methodology they employed that was clearly reflective of national and/or state standards for practice. For example, the majority of programs reported that students regularly engaged in activities aligned with the standards-based criteria such as: using technology tools for learning, productions, and creative exercises; using multiple technology resources to communicate information and ideas; using technology for research; and using technology for problem-solving in the real world.

Link to standards. In the surveys, afterschool staff were asked whether they employ standards-based content instruction in their practices. Results revealed that many staff included standard-based content in their curriculum. However, within each content area, some standards were used more often than others.

In the content area of reading, more staff reported using lower grade-level standards as represented by "Vocabulary development" (96%) and "Reading silently or aloud with fluency" (96%). The upper grade-level standards as represented by "Applying self-correcting strategies to decode text" (55%) and "Understanding literary techniques" (61%) were used by a lower percentage of staff.

Similar to reading, math also reported applying lower grade level standards such as "Addition and subtraction of whole numbers" and "Pattern recognition" more often, only 50% of the math staff reported on applying higher level standards such as "Problem solving using equations" and "Understanding/applying mean, range, and median."

Most of the arts staff reported employing standards-based arts curriculum. The most commonly applied (93%) standard was "apply art techniques and processes." The least common practice was in the integration of arts with technology, where only 33% of the arts staff indicated that they "use technology as a creative tool."

In general, most science instructors indicated employing standards-based curriculum. Due to the vast numbers of contents available, there were wide variations in subject selections. For example, only 33% indicated that they worked with "reproduction and heredity" in their instruction, whereas 80% indicated that they used the content "understanding of science/technology."

For technology, most of the program staff indicating that they gave students opportunities to "practice responsible behavior and use of technology." The least visited standard which only 43% of technology staff reported applying was "research and evaluate the accuracy and bias of electronic information." Once again, grade level would play a role in

the staff's selections of content topics, with most of the choices leaning towards the lower grade levels.

Because there were no homework content standards, homework instructors were not included. The details of each standard-based content and the related percentage of usages are found in Appendix A.

Linkage to School

According to Clayton (2004), "Afterschool programs need a strong connection to the learning objectives of the day school in order to increase student achievement." This continuity of learning between the school and afterschool program is supported theoretically in the work of Noam, Biancarosa, and Dechausay (2002). These researchers posit that the "bridging" of school and afterschool helps to promote more meaningful academic learning. Miller (1995) further emphasize that it is possible for students to "increase [their] sense of themselves as learners" and to "transfer positive experiences in a school-based afterschool program to more positive feelings about school itself" (p.46). The pattern of communications and relations of the day school and afterschool program were examined. This section will present results on the frequency of communication between afterschool and day-school staff as well as links to the day-school curriculum.

Frequency of communication. The staff survey inquired how frequently the afterschool staff communicated with the day-school teachers. Figure 11 displays the reported frequency of communication.

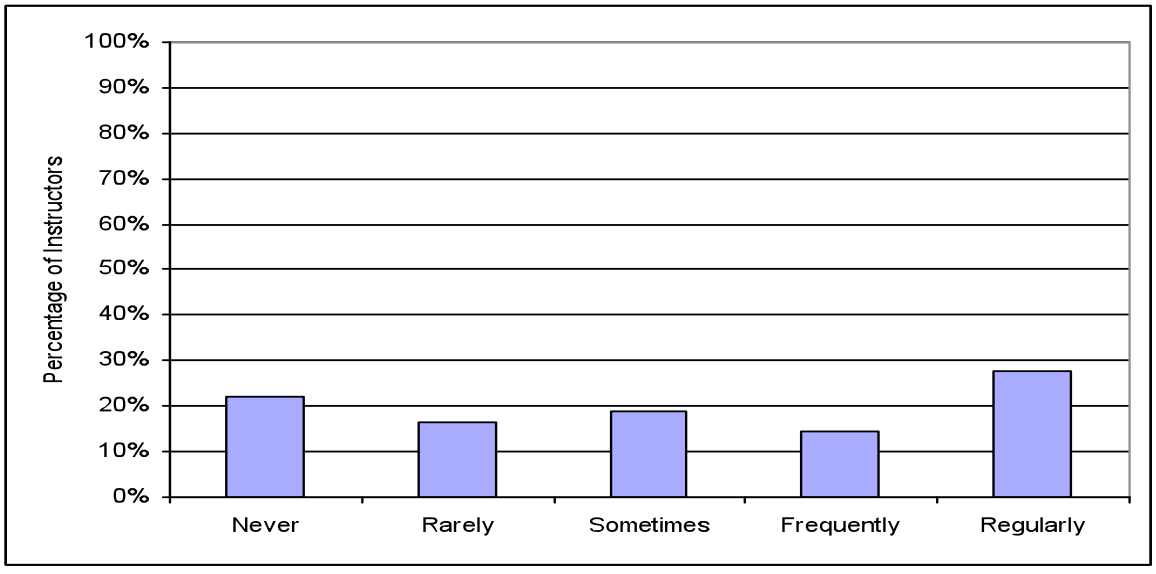


Figure 11. Frequency of communication between afterschool program and day-school staff.

As shown earlier, slightly less than half of the afterschool staff indicated that they communicated with the day school frequently or regularly, while an equal number of afterschool staff indicated that they never or rarely communicate with day-school staff. About 20% of afterschool staff reported that they sometimes communicated with day-school teachers.

Links to day-school curriculum. Because a critical component of effective afterschool programming is the coordination of program content to the day-school curriculum, the interviews conducted with the afterschool staff probed deeper into the connections between day school and afterschool. A number of distinct themes emerged from the qualitative analyses.

Project directors, site coordinators, and program staff were requested to describe the styles of communication and coordination between the day school and afterschool. With a few exceptions, most afterschool staff reported a more casual form of communication with the day-school teachers, typically on an "as-needed" basis in regards to individual student progress and/or behavioral issues. Communications with the day-school teachers occurred mostly in forms of brief, informal contacts such as email or casual drop-in conversations.

A few programs described a more intentional approach. For example, overlap in day school and afterschool staff was mentioned as a strategy to allow for more collaboration and communication between day school and afterschool. In some district-affiliated programs, they referred to this process as a "seamless approach." In other instances, a YMCA program made use of agendas, planners, and homework logs to communicate with day-school teachers relating to homework assignments, and coordination of curricular contents. Overall, the key topics on most of the communication between day school and afterschool were homework related, indicating homework as a crucial component of most academic activities in afterschool and a means of connection between the day-school and afterschool teachers.

An interesting exception was the science afterschool programs, where the majority of site coordinators (90%) and staff (93%), reported that specific staff members were assigned or responsible for communication with the day school. At a closer look, six of the nine science programs are district affiliated, with two of the other three community-based programs indicating strong ties with the day school.

Some general commonalities were also found in terms of adjusting practice according to student need. For example, most district affiliated programs reported including input from their day-school teachers when fine-tuning their curriculum. Other programs also solicited

input from parents and students; two programs actually employed an Education Coordinator in their programs to manage coordination with the day school in curriculum development.

Exemplary Practices: A Collaborative Approach

Staff at one program in particular described a science program that was clearly the result of a collaborative effort between day-school and afterschool instructors, designed around and coordinated with the district's science curriculum, grounded in state and/or national science standards, and supplemented with purchased science kit materials. Science lessons revolved around a fish hatchery theme, developed primarily during day-school instruction, and maintained and studied throughout the year in both the day school and the afterschool program. According to interviewees, this concept provided a focus that gave students a beneficial sense of continuity between day school and afterschool science instruction. One site coordinator explained,

> What's really neat about this is that it was a collaborative project….We worked together. Not just one school building, but we got together and partnered with another building and we made sure that we had representatives from across the grade levels. So we've got pre-K through fifth grade and then specialists represented, and we designed the curriculum….We went ahead and tied this curriculum to the national science standards, which will make it very easy for our day-school teachers to incorporate this program into the day school, because it's electronic. All of their lesson plans are ready to go for this program, and it will all be tied to the national standards.

Research-based Practices

Afterschool program instructors were asked about the use of research-based practices and teaching strategies. This section will explore the curricular design and decision making structures, as well as content specific instructional strategies.

Curricular design. Most afterschool programs indicated that they designed the curriculum, rather than rely on pre-designed or purchased curriculum. At one arts program, decisions about the arts curriculum were clearly a collaborative effort in terms of both afterschool teamwork and working closely with community partners and the day school. This program's approach appeared to be integrative in many respects, but most evidently and effectively with regard to arts curriculum development. The arts community partnership director at the afterschool program explained the process in detail:

> [Our arts program is] self-designed. We don't purchase any programs….We don't purchase a curriculum. We work with a variety of artists….We do rely on my knowledge and our artists' knowledge….We are really responsive to the community and what we understand their needs to be at this moment. We create curriculum that addresses that.

> We do that together. The artists ultimately are the ones that carry that out. They're the ones working with the kids on a day-to-day basis. We talk together with them. [The project director] and I, we meet with the principals and different representatives before we do any scheduling for the session, to talk about the curriculum areas that are in need at this time. We take those ideas and talk to our artists, and together come up with the format of what we're going to do. The artists do the lesson plan of the actual lesson. [It's] a joint process between [the project director], myself, our artists, and the schools. We meet with the principals. We start with the themes or the curriculum areas that need to be addressed….Then we look at each session and what an overarching curriculum area might be for that session….Then we work with our artists to come up with a variety of ways to address those topic areas….In a variety of art mediums, we're addressing [those] topic area[s].

This approach to curriculum design was also echoed by a site coordinator at a science afterschool program: "[The curriculum is] self-designed—nothing is cookie cutter here….Our teachers design everything that we do here," while another site coordinator stated simply that the program staff "come up with their own curriculum and they make sure it ties with the [state] standards."

On the other hand, some programs did indicate using curriculum from the day school or that were pre-designed. The project director at another science afterschool program indicated that they relied primarily on the day-school curriculum:

> First of all, we use what is being taught in the day school. We take whatever curriculum they're using and enhance that. The way that we do that is we actually use our regular day teachers as our afterschool teachers. The curriculum is already there. We use what is on their lesson plans. We take from that and work with that as far as what we do in the academics. We also advance into that by having projects and programs with research based things, such as *Design It*, which is a science project. We use their curriculum for our science activities, *Wide Span* for reading and math.

Similarly, a site coordinator at a reading afterschool program remarked that the curriculum used was pre-designed and straightforward: "It's very recipe-like. It tells them exactly what questions to ask prior to the book, the activity suggestions. It's very laid out for them, so it's very user-friendly."

Overall, whereas some programs chose to use pre-designed curriculum and others preferred to design their own, all programs had consensus that they want to employ curriculum that would support students' academic competence, while making learning fun and less rigid than in the school day.

Content Specific Instructional Strategies

From extensive literature reviews, research-based practices in the six content areas were extracted. Some of the common practices across the six contents included scaffolding techniques that appeared to be correlated with grouping strategies, and the "real world" approach that was used to encourage student learning by infusing the learning process with cultural and social experiences that were relevant to their lives. Other common practices in science, arts, and technology included a "hands on" approach; active participation, "learning through doing," students making connections on their own, and the constant shifting from guided work, to group work, to pairs work, then to self-paced work, and back once more to guided work at a higher level.

In general, survey data suggested that afterschool staff employed a wide range of research-based practices to support and facilitate their students' learning. The analysis of the survey data also revealed that there were variations based on the content focus. For example, technology programs reported the most frequent use of research-based practices whereas reading programs reported the lowest frequency. Furthermore, technology, science, arts, and homework programs appeared to be more focused on developing higher order thinking skills, whereas reading and math programs were more focused on direct teaching. For instance, one technology instructor talked about teaching her students to problem solve: "You have to know how to fix it. How do you solve this problem? The engineer is sitting in that seat now, and something goes wrong, you've got to troubleshoot. That's part of life with anything. Troubleshooting and problem solving skills are needed." Specifically, in science content, the most frequent practices were (a) describing scientific procedures to students, (b) using tools to gather and analyze data, (c) designing a scientific investigation, (d) conduct simple experiments, and (e) using evidence to predict and explain. All these strategies were designed to promote applicable techniques and higher order thinking skills and were practiced fairly evenly across all science programs.

On the other hand, math and reading programs were more focused on direct instruction. For example, math staff reported the use of mathematical tools, asking students to solve world problems, and providing instructions to solve math problems most frequently. The less frequently practiced instructional strategy appeared to be in the arena of developing students' higher order thinking skills such as providing unstructured opportunities for students to investigate and explore, and having students write justifications for their work. The least practiced strategy in math and reading programs was having students actively participate in hypothesis testing. In many of the math and reading programs, program staff mentioned teaching knowledge facts through direct instruction. One math staff commented, "So we have

pretty much tried to stay with just basic facts for them to learn math facts." Another reading staff talked about reading instruction: "In particular I work with two students that their parents requested them to stay here with the afterschool program because they don't have the support at home to read and learn vocabulary with their parents. So I try to make a point to read and study words with them." These trends can be results of the differences in content characteristics, and/or a process of program maturation (since math and reading were visited in Year 1, the afterschool program as a field has gone through rapid development and maturation).

For more detailed analyses (afterschool staff were asked to rate the frequency with which they employed specific instructional practices on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating never, and 5 indicating more than once a week), the frequencies of the usage of specific instructional practices under each content area can be found in Appendix A.

Cross-Content Integration

Over the six content areas, the curriculum for technology was the most integrative; these programs incorporated technology learning into many of the afterschool activities across academic content areas including science, reading, math, and arts. One site coordinator commented on the integration of technology into the afterschool curriculum: "In most all of our subject areas technology is incorporated somehow and integrated into it." She further expanded:

> I talked about the language arts. The math you could get into how many beats per minute for a song. You have to do counting. When someone is doing the background music you have to figure out how many counts, how many beats per minute or per stand that they're doing it on. So there's a lot of math involved with that. Science, I'm sure there's a science, but I can't pick it off the top of my head. Art, we actually have one of the teachers from Henninger's. She incorporates a lot of art, and especially when they do famous groups. They might work on a comic book or a stage set, so they do a lot of drawing and things like that or even computer parts.

Homework programs also had a broader conception of instruction that focused not only on homework assistance and completion, but also on developing study skills, work habits, and organization skills. The four skills most staff mentioned enforcing were: development of time management skills, development of skills in using reference material, development of note taking skills, and strategies for test preparation. For instance, one homework staff member commented on modeling note-taking for her students: "I'll give notes to try to explain to the kids this is how you should take notes when I'm doing it. You don't have to write everything down, but then there are some teachers that want you to make sure you

write everything down." Another staff member mentioned teaching study skills as an important component of afterschool homework instruction: "Teachers sort of become experts at homework at some point. I do work with my students on study skills. It's really what I focus on. It doesn't matter if it's homework or if it's class work or if it's just some extracurricular activity that they're working on, but I really work on study skills with them."

Summary

In general, these programs adhered to the structure of goal-oriented programs as reviewed in the literatures. Almost all programs under study had set clear program goals and objectives, and designed strategic plans to achieve their goals. For example, some of the math, reading, and homework programs had improvement on academic achievement as their program goal. These programs hired credential teachers as instructors, focused their curriculum and teaching strategies to enhance student academic achievement and academic skill building.

Math and reading programs tended to focus more on improving basic skills whereas science, arts, and technology programs had goals of exposing and engaging students to their specific contents. The science, arts and technology programs hired and/or collaborated with experts in their field, and emphasized exposing students to a variety of experiences in their field, provided students with enrichments and personal experiences, and tended to focus on developing the higher-order thinking skills such as gathering data, analyzing data, and reporting/presenting the findings. Homework help programs also intended to provide more skill building to their students through improving students' organization, time management, and test preparation skills in addition to supervising and monitoring homework.

At the same time, all 53 programs had broad knowledge of National and State Standards in their content areas, and alignment with standards was quite obvious at most sites. However, although most programs were employing standard-based curriculum, some of the program staff were not well versed in expressing links between standards and their curriculum. As a point of interest, while almost all programs adhered to standard-based curriculum, most of the programs, regardless of grade levels, tended to focus more on the basic standards rather than the more advanced standards in their content area. This may be a reflection of the demographics of the student population because all the programs were working with low-performing schools, and perhaps populated with more primary grade students.

Some of the common research-based practices across the programs included the "real world" approach that was used to encourage students' learning by infusing the learning

process with cultural and social experiences that were relevant to their lives as well as "hands on" approaches in science, arts, and technology; students given the freedom to test and expand their own knowledge through doing, stressed on students "learning through doing" and to make connections on their own, and the constant shifting from guided work to group work to pairs work, then to self-paced work and back once more to guided work at a higher level.

Although all programs appeared to maintain positive relations with the day school, most of the linkages were in casual formats and communication with day-school teachers often happened on an "as needed" basis. In these occasions, homework was usually the key topic. Some programs, especially the district-run programs which usually constituted shared staff, had better communication systems in place, whereas a few district-run programs emphasized a "seamless approach" where afterschool program could be considered as an extension of the school day. A few community-based programs also made specific efforts to maintain open channels between school and afterschool. In one program, a key person was designated to liaison between the day and afterschool. In another program, a system in form of a homework-log, check list, and meeting dates was set to ensure frequent correspondence.

EVALUATIVE STRUCTURES AND PROGRAM IMPACT

Program Evaluation

Nationally and across a number of states, there is a growing emphasis on the evaluation of afterschool programs. Funders want to know that their investment is making a difference and are encouraging programs to engage in continuous improvement, making assessment and evaluation an integral part of their functions.

There are typically two types of evaluation that apply to afterschool programming: internal and external. Internal evaluation is a process of quality review undertaken within an institution for its own ends. External evaluation is the appraisal process performed by an agency or individuals not directly involved in or responsible for the program or activities evaluated. Interview and survey responses across the 53 participating programs in this study indicated that even though rigorous examinations of data are very rare, all of the afterschool programs appeared to be conducting varying degrees of internal and external evaluations of their programs.

Overall, project directors seemed to be the most knowledgeable about evaluation, particularly external evaluations. Site coordinators were usually familiar with their individual sites' internal evaluations and quality assurance procedures. Program staff were most familiar

with informal student assessment procedures and tools utilized to monitor student progress at the classroom level.

External Evaluation

Responses from interviewees suggested that many of the programs were evaluated externally, sometimes by an evaluation organization experienced in program evaluation. Most interviewees from all programs consistently indicated that most of the evaluations were of the entire program. The methodologies utilized in these evaluations typically included pre–post testing or classroom evaluations, comparison groups, surveys, focus groups, observational assessments, or a combination of these methods. In general, interviewees from the majority of the programs reported positive results from these evaluations, although specific results were not supplemented and substantiated with reports.

Only the technology programs reported having content specific evaluations. These evaluations were undertaken by a variety of public and private organizations including Dell, Intel, and several universities. The evaluation tracked the overall effectiveness of the technology and larger curriculum, often using computer software to monitor student progress in the day school and use that as a barometer to adjust afterschool programming.

For the reading and math programs that were closely affiliated with the school districts, over half did not conduct an external evaluation; and approximately one third of programs mentioned having an external evaluator. Responses to questions regarding program evaluation also varied in the interview data, most likely attributable to different interpretations of the term "program evaluation." A significant number of the programs considered the process of preparation for the Annual Performance Report (APR/ PPICs) and the visits from the state coordinators as a form of external evaluation.

Internal Evaluation

All but two programs reported having conducted some formal or informal internal evaluation. Evaluation varied from informal conversations between afterschool staff, day-school staff, and parents to a formal administration of surveys to students, parents, staff, and tracking of test scores, grades, and attendance records. One program reported a relatively rigorous formal evaluation process that involved quarterly assessment reports from staff, pre–post testing, tracking of grades and student progress in the day school, and student surveys on program satisfaction. The program director explained the intent of the evaluation:

> Once a quarter, each [site] has to come together and present to the Board as well as [the director] about what happened last quarter. It's not just what happened from a laundry list. We're trying to create a learning organization. It's an opportunity for the unit

> directors to share among themselves and to learn from each other. It creates opportunities to share ideas. And it bring a little bit of accountability in.

Other types of informal evaluations attempted to capture program effectiveness in all areas. This included staff meetings as a space for discussion about what was and wasn't working, talking to students, parents and day-school teachers, collaboration among peers and anecdotal evidence from individual students who had transformed during or after participation in the program. One instructor explained, "There is an informal evaluation where we're always talking about what's working and what doesn't work and about what we could do differently." At another setting, a project director said that questions such as "Do you feel [the program is] effective? Do you think your child has learned?" were addressed to parents and teachers to help the program in self-assessment.

In general, interviewees most frequently mentioned using the results of internal evaluation to serve as a baseline for instruction, monitor student progress, and to document program impact. For example, the principal at one of the science afterschool programs reported that student achievement data from an internal evaluation were used to revise science curricula at the afterschool program in order to align instruction with the standards and improve student performance:

> That was the reason why the [afterschool program] curriculum went under revision, because [our students] were not measuring up nationally. When you look at their assessments on the [state test]…they weren't measuring up with other states; and because of that we had to go back and revisit our curriculum to see where we were falling through the cracks. What we found was that we [needed to revise] our objectives—they were too narrow. So teachers were limiting instruction to just those methods, when really there was a whole standard that needed to be scored. There was a whole area that children needed to know by the end of the school year, so that revision had to take place.

Interestingly, a pattern emerged in the resources and purposes of evaluations between the community-based programs and the district-affiliated programs. It appeared that the district-affiliated programs seemed to have easier access to student academic databases, and about half of these programs made use of this access to establish baselines and determine areas of academic need for their students. The student academic database and classroom grades were also used as outcome measures in determining academic growth and progress, especially for programs with the explicit goal of raising students' achievement scores.

The community-based programs all reported conducting internal evaluations on a regular basis, some more intensive and extensive than others. They appeared to have a broader focus, and utilized a mixture of parent, staff, students', and classroom teachers'

surveys to seek feedback. These data served to inform programs from multiple perspectives, provided a continuous feedback loop for self-improvement, and measured program satisfaction rates.

Perceptions of Program Impact

All programs reported having positive impacts on their students in some ways. Most of the evidence provided was anecdotal, but a few formal evaluations and systematical tracking of student progress showed improvements in attendance, classroom grades, and achievement scores. At the less quantifiable level, several programs reported improvements in attitudes toward schooling, student efficacy, confidence, and engagement. Moreover, individual success stories highlighted the transformational potential of the afterschool setting in improving not only study skills, attitudes, and behavior, but also increasing the self-esteem of students and their social competencies.

Staff

Most staff interviewed reported that their program had impacted students positively in some way. Although most feedback on this topic was anecdotal, interviewees most consistently cited improvements in the areas of attendance (both in the day school and the afterschool program), engagement and interest in the content area, social behavior, and student achievement.

Interviewees indicated that their students' attendance, both in the afterschool program and in the day school, was consistent and indicated growth over time. However, almost none of the interviewees provided evidence linking attendance to achievement. Most of the programs also noted that there was a waiting list for their programs, and indicated that there were no recruitment or retention concerns. Although most respondents mentioned that students loved to come to the afterschool program and even preferred attending the afterschool program to the day-school program, very few provided enough detail to draw substantial conclusions. Nonetheless, afterschool program staff perceptions on program impact are worth noting here, and a good number of staff members commented that student interest in their afterschool program had facilitated improvements in attendance. One arts instructor noted,

> Attendance is unbelievable. I have kids that say, 'I only came to school today because I knew I was going to be working with you.' I feel, just from talking with my teachers, that behavior problems in some instances are resolved. Students have success in my class.

Furthermore, the following impressions offered by the project director for one of the science afterschool programs indicate a breadth of afterschool program impact not always captured by quantitative data:

> I want [the program] to be measured by supporting school success, because that is what I think leads to academic achievement. We have clear research that says that the children in our afterschool program have better attendance. Their truancy has decreased significantly. They're not tardy. Their behavior in class increases significantly. Their connection to a professional adult as measured by the child increases significantly—statistically significantly….Those are the things to me that eventually translate into school success. So we do think we're improving academic achievement….We think that is significant.

A technology program director reinforced this assertion and explained:

> There's a whole part of afterschool that is so hard to put into an evaluation form. That's how you change lives and what you offer, the possibilities and dreams that can come true. That's so hard to put into a question. I think it's very important that everybody understand the power that can come from an afterschool program in affecting change, not only cultural change on campus but also individually in particular lives. I have seen a whole campus turn around demonstrating that learning can be fun and can still address the needs for standardized tests. Their sense of accomplishment that comes from being in one of our programs where they have more freedom to explore and have more hands-on experiences is profound.

Some program staff also mentioned improvements in students' achievement and attitudes towards learning. Most of these feedbacks were clearly anecdotal and related directly to staff perceptions. Yet, some programs were able to cite specific academic gains; for example, some of the district-affiliated math and reading programs have observed growth in district test scores and/or classroom grades, and many homework staff stated that the students' achievement was greatly related to the homework assistance given at afterschool programs. This was corroborated by a day-school principal,

> Our test scores have risen every year for 4 years. They had gone down every year for 7 years before [the homework afterschool program started at the school]. In the last 4 years, and including this year again, they're up anywhere from 3–5%. A lot of it is because we started working together.

Incidentally, all program staff across the content areas mentioned a marked improvement in students' engagement and interest in the content area over time. Almost all interviewees across the 53 programs reported that students were happy and enthusiastic to be at the afterschool programs. They were eager to attend the programs, and some staff reported

that even when the students were absent during the school day, they still wanted to come and attended the program. Additionally, staff also frequently remarked that students expressed a new appreciation for, and interest in the focused content area. For example, one science staff member proudly explained, "I've had my seventh and eighth graders tell me that they want to go into a career in science instead of being a dancer or a football player or something like that. They've actually told me they want to get a career in science." Similarly, a staff member of a technology program explained the value and relevance of her technology instruction,

> We see a big improvement at the high school. What we're finding is if you give the student the laptop, which we provide for every student to take home and use, they complete their homework and it's higher quality….Even our students that have social problems, when they're more fixed on a project that [uses] the computer, they do a lot better. We see a lot of better behavior in those children.

Consistently, all program staff reported having positive relationships with their students, and suggested that the afterschool programs have had positive impacts on students' self-confidence, social skills, and attitudes towards learning. Observation data supported the interview data, with students observed to be actively engaged in most of the sites visited. Programs appeared to make specific efforts to select materials that were of high interest to students, and program staff engaged students with meaningful questions and frequent attempts to get students involved. A majority of the interviewees indicated that their students enjoyed and benefited from the afterschool program, and some felt that the afterschool programs appealed especially to students who were academically disengaged by offering them the kind of personal attention and assistance they needed.

Parents

Parents were surveyed and their inputs on program satisfaction and perceived academic impacts were analyzed. In general, parents reported seeing improvements in their children's skills and overall interest in the specific content area, their interest in school work, and in finishing the specific content area homework on time. Parents were also inquired about perceived changes in the students' skills and interests. Again, survey results indicated that parents perceived improvements in the students' skills and interest after they participated in the programs. Figure 12 illustrates the results.

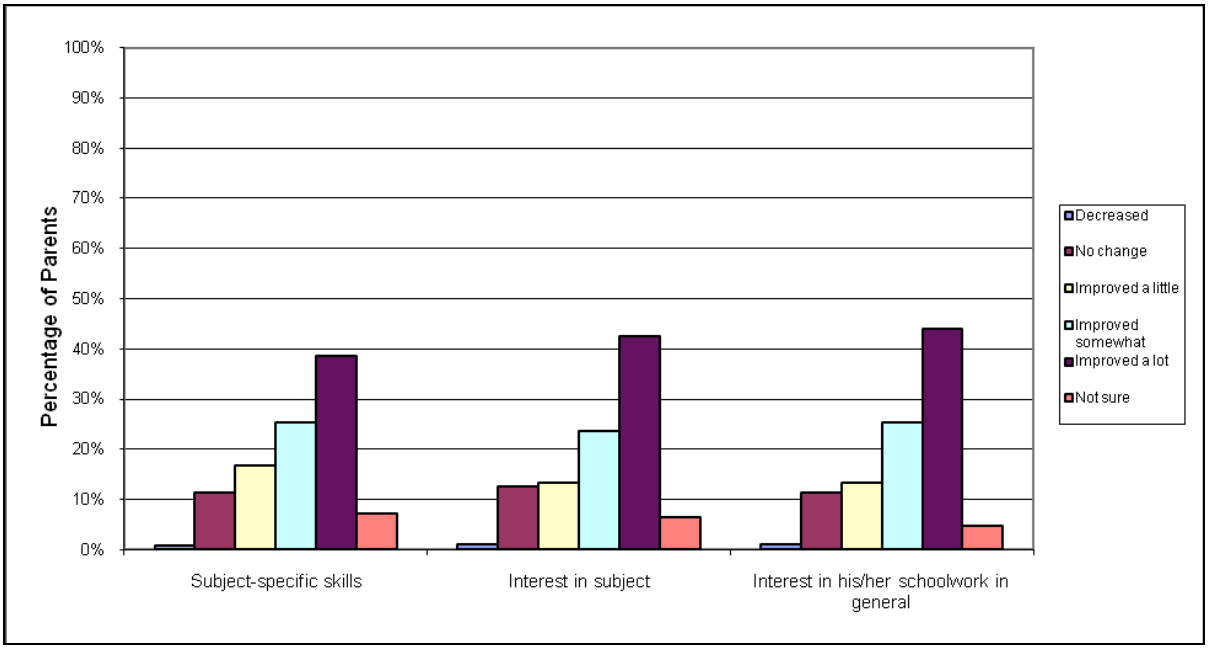


Figure 12. Parent perception of changes in student behavior.

About 75% of the parents perceived that their children's skills and interest improved since participating in the afterschool program, whereas a minimal number of parents (1%) saw a decrease. Approximately 11% to 13% of the parents did not perceive any changes in their children's performance or attitudes, while an average of 7% were not sure about any changes. The survey also inquired parents on changes in their children's interest in schoolwork in general, and results found that 44% of the parents saw a great improvement.

Day-school Teachers

For Years 2 and 3, day-school teachers were included in the survey administrations. The first item on the teacher survey determined if teachers knew which of their students participated in the afterschool program. Only those who answered "yes" were requested to proceed with two follow-up questions in regards to perceived changes in these students since they began participation in the afterschool program. Day-school teachers were inquired about their perceptions on any behavioral changes on a 5-point scale, from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) and to provide their assessments of the changes in students' performance and attitudes from 1 (*decreased greatly*) to 5 being "(*increased greatly*).

Most teachers for the 35 programs in Year 2 and 3 reported that they had noticed positive changes in students' behaviors in terms of school attendance, frequency of classroom participations, effort on school work, paying attention in class, and discipline problems, their responses are displayed in Figure 13.

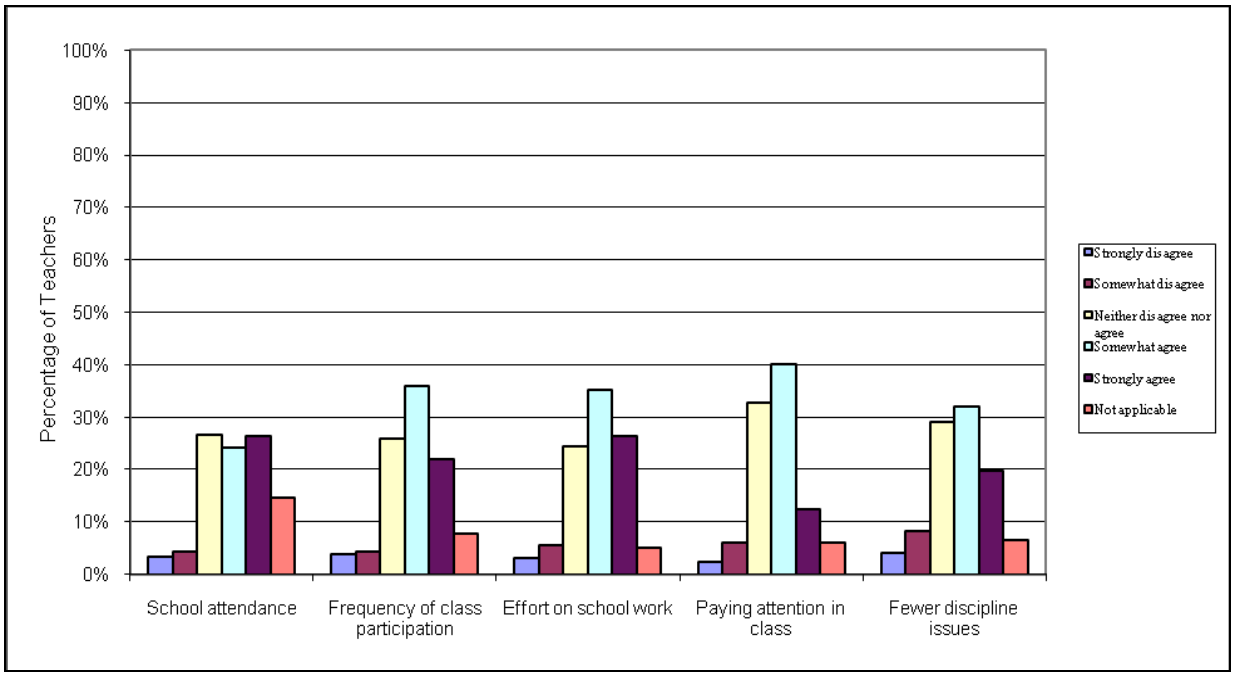


Figure 13. Teacher perception of changes in student behavior.

As shown in Figure 13, about 10% of the day-school teachers had not noticed a positive change in students' behavior in terms of school attendance, frequency of classroom participation, effort on school work, paying attention in class, and discipline problems. About half agreed that their students in these afterschool programs had improved in school attendance, were paying more attention in class, and had fewer discipline problems. In addition, 58% of teachers agreed that the afterschool program students increased their frequency of class participation, and most teachers (61%) agreed that their students in the afterschool program put more effort into school work.

Day-school teachers were also surveyed in regards to their perception of any academic performance and attitude changes in students participating in these afterschool programs. Academic performance and attitude changes are defined differently according to the specific content area. The definitions for the four content areas are as follows:

Arts: willingness to participate in various arts activities, the overall quality of their art projects, perceptual and expressive skills, technical skills (e.g., ability to paint, sing, play a musical instrument), attitudes toward the arts in general, and ability to engage in higher order thinking.

Science: science skills, science test grades, attitudes toward science and homework, and the quality and timely completion of science homework.

Technology: participation in technology activities, overall technical skills, attitude towards technology, engage in higher order thinking, cooperative collaborative skills, persistence in school work, and problem-solving skills.

Homework: motivation for completing homework, ability to complete homework, time management skills, organizational skills, cooperative and collaborative skills, performance on tests, persistence in school work, problem-solving skills, study and research skills, and quality of work overall.

Most notably in the four content areas, a majority of teachers perceived an improvement in their students' overall interest and skills in the content-specific area. Most teachers also noticed a positive increase in their attitudes towards the content area. Perhaps due to the fact that some of the teachers surveyed did not directly supervise the students in arts, science, or technology, up to 30% of the teachers responded that they did not know whether there had been a change in the students' academic performance. Meanwhile, of the teachers whose students participated in homework assistance afterschool programs, 47% to 75% perceived improvements in their students' performance on tests and their ability to complete homework.

Summary

In summary, external evaluations on the content-specific component of the programs were not always conducted. Only technology programs consistently reported having external evaluations on the technology component of their programs. In other programs, if external programs were conducted, they were usually program-wide where the findings were generally positive and strong evidences to support the claims were rare. Most of the programs conducted internal evaluations, some more formal than others. The purposes of these evaluations were for program improvements, such as monitoring student progress, measuring program growth, research for program needs, and gauging program impacts. Except for some of the district-affiliated math and reading programs, student assessments throughout the programs were informal, generally in the forms of spot checking, questioning, and observing student understandings.

Overall, programs were perceived by parents, staff, and teachers to have positive impacts on student engagement, attitudes, skills, and their knowledge improvements. More specifically, programs were perceived to improve attendance, especially if the students were engaged in the afterschool programs. Students were happy and enthusiastic to be attending the program, and engaged in program activities. All afterschool staff reported having positive relationships with their students, and consistently suggested that the programs had positive impacts on students' self-confidence, social skills, and attitudes towards learning. Most of the program staff mentioned an improvement in students' achievement and attitudes towards learning. Day-school teachers reported that they perceived improvements in the students' attitudes and skills toward four of the six content areas. Behaviors (i.e., school attendance,

frequency of class participation, effort on school work, paying attention in class, fewer discipline issues) were also perceived to have greatly improved. In all of the content areas (except homework), parents also perceived improvements in content-specific skills, interest in a specific content area, interest in schoolwork in general, and finishing content-specific homework on time. Parents with children in the homework help programs saw improvement in their child's motivation to complete homework, ability to complete homework, time management skills, organizational skills, and interest in school work in general.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The findings in this study indicate that the characteristics of the identified afterschool programs appeared to be aligned with the criteria established for exemplary practices in terms of program structure, student engagement, instructional strategies, and issues of accountability.

The common characteristics that were found across the afterschool programs are listed here:

- These programs had strong leadership and established clear goals.
- They aligned program structures and contents to meet those goals.
- They set a schedule that allowed time for students to learn and practice.
- They established relationships with the day school.
- Their curriculum in general reflected a linkage to standards.
- Most of the programs used research-based strategies.
- They all maintained some form of evaluative structures.
- Staff members had low turn over rates.
- Staff members related well to the students.
- The staff were able to build rapport, maintained high expectations, kept students motivated and engaged.

Most of the 53 programs in this study had set clear goals and structured their programs to meet the goals. To increase the students' academic skills, many of the math, reading, and homework programs used a "seamless approach" to connect the day school with afterschool and employed certified teachers. To expose students to the experiences of science, arts, and technology, programs used hands-on approaches and generally collaborated with organizations that are strong in the specific content areas, such as Arts Corps, Girls' Inc., local universities, Dell, Apple, etc. Almost all of the 53 programs maintained good

relationships with the day-school personnel. However, few of them had established formal communication systems for that purpose. Moreover, across all the programs, staff had knowledge of content standards and engaged in content specific research-based instructional strategies. To engage students and staff, these programs recruited qualified staff and created working environments that built comradeship and inspired support for the programs' missions. As the staff felt respected, supported, autonomous, and confident in their ability to reach their students, these programs were able to retain staff and achieve lower turnover rates than other programs. In turn, staff and students were able to construct positive relationships with each other, characterized by warmth and mutual respect. This supportive relationship permits the staff to serve as role models, creating a norm of high expectations, and strengthening student behavior, school attendance, work habits, and attitudes towards learning. At the same time, most programs also recognized the importance of considering student voices when making decisions regarding program activities and content; hence, many programs allowed students to provide input, especially in the arts and technology programs. Many of these programs also made use of research-based strategies to engage and motivate students, making learning fun. Overall, programs reported some form of internal and/or external evaluations for accountability and self-improvement purposes. As a result, students were engaged and excited to be in the programs. In general, day-school teachers, parents, and afterschool staff perceived the programs to have positive influences on the students. Some programs reported increased school attendance, better test scores, and most of the programs reported positive changes in behaviors and attitudes towards learning. Parents were very satisfied with the programs both in terms of positive changes in their children's behaviors and attitudes, and in general program functioning.

As discussed earlier, the single most dominant characteristic that is consistently revealed in all programs visited was the high motivation level of the sites. These high functioning programs were characterized by strong leadership. Staff members were empowered to engage in program missions that included internal motivations, such as making a difference in the lives of their students. It appeared that this intrinsic motivation for staff members to bond with the students was a powerful force toward the aspirations of both the staff and the students. This relationship can be further enhanced, so that the afterschool staff can foster the relationship to induce academic resiliency in their students. Implications focused on these areas will be discussed.

Implications

As the quality of afterschool programs is further embedded in the social systems of schools, families, communities, networks, state, and federal policies and regulations, in order

to induce sustainable change in students, all the systems have to function collaboratively together. Because the key findings of this study point to the strength of strong leadership and the motivational value of the staff-student relationship, there is the potential of enhancing their skills to create a tighter social system and bring in more resources from the day school, families, and communities. In order to do that, there is the need of providing meaningful, informative, and regular professional development opportunities to the afterschool staff to further enhance their abilities and collaborative skills. However, the findings of this study also indicate that the participation rate in professional development is quite low. Thus, additional incentives through policies and guidelines are needed to encourage staff to take part in the professional development. These can be achieved through: (a) policies that support staff (professional) development, (b) funding sources and designations, and (c) ongoing program evaluation to prescribe professional development needs.

Professional Development

The study's findings show that professional development was not regularly offered at all programs, and when offered, participation rates tended to be low. Moreover, project directors and site coordinators appeared to attend conferences and workshops more often than the program staff. This can be due to many possible reasons: the higher turnover rate of other staff members (in comparison to project directors and site coordinators), the tight scheduling in afterschool programs (which makes it difficult to spare staff members for professional development), and limited budgets to pay staff time for professional development or to pay for substitutes. Because professional development has a strong correlation with staff efficacy, quality of the delivery of the intended lessons, and hence student outcomes (Ingvarson, Meiers, & Beavis, 2005), federal and state policies guiding the development and operations of afterschool programs should take the study findings into consideration and provide additional guidelines and regulations for the provision of sufficient quality professional development opportunities for afterschool programs.

At the site level, program directors and site coordinators should provide professional development opportunities to increase staff readiness to address student needs. Program directors should re-examine program goals to decide whether site coordinators or program staff would benefit most from attending certain conferences and professional development opportunities, and make decisions accordingly. If there is a "training-of-the-trainer" approach at the sites, a systematic system or manual should be established to ensure professional development fidelity. When planning the yearly calendar, time off for professional development, reserving substitutes for the staff to attend professional development, or closing the program a few times a year to allow for staff development should be considered.

The findings of this study pointed to several specific areas where afterschool staff would benefit from professional development: (a) content and curriculum, (b) collaboration with the day school, (c) evaluation and assessment, and (d) parent involvement. Each of these areas of professional development will be discussed.

Content and curriculum. The study findings showed that although most program staff were aware of the standards within specific content areas, they were less knowledgeable about the links between the standards and their instructional practices. To support program staff in becoming more familiar with curriculum standards and to be more creative with the implementation of these standards in their instruction, professional development in content and curriculum should be consistently provided.

While discussing relationship building and curriculum content and standards, it should be noted here that the positive relationships existing among the students and staff might be due to a variety of unexplored variables (e.g., that the afterschool staff were from the same community; the afterschool staff shared similar life experiences as the students and were able to connect to them better; a certain aspect of their personality made them more appealing and trustworthy to the students, etc.) that researchers are not yet able to affirmatively identify. Thus, one should not be hasty and take the short route by in replacing current staff with certified staff in order to promote better academic outcomes, instead professional development and enhancing the readiness and knowledge base of the current staff would be the recommended route.

To facilitate this practice, state agencies should set policies to guide program functioning and provide periodic monitoring to ensure that the staff have received adequate professional development to meet program expectations for high quality, engaging academic instruction. State agencies should also work closely with professional development providers and afterschool programs to coordinate the professional development topics offered at national and regional conferences to meet staff needs and interests. With the efficiency of technology, toolkits such as the ones offered by this Afterschool Partnership make it possible to instantly deliver to any program the most updated instructional practices in a cost-effective way, and these should be utilized at all program levels.

Furthermore, when making policies regarding afterschool programs, policy makers should keep in mind that even with the best preapproved, flawless research-based curriculums, the delivery of the content is as important as the content itself. Thus, policies and legislation guiding program certifications and re-certifications should consider the need

for staff members and administrators of afterschool programs to maintain continuous professional development, updates and support with the new developments in the field.

Collaboration with the day school. The study findings indicated that the day school plays an influential role in the efficiency of their affiliated afterschool programs. The day school can provide space (e.g., classrooms, playgrounds), and resources (e.g., use of computers, academic and behavioral data on the students, access into classroom records, professional development opportunities, etc.) which are important to afterschool program organization and student learning. All of the programs visited in this study maintained good relationships with the day school. However, as important as this relationship is, very few programs in this study had set up strategic systems to establish and strengthen this relationship. Professional development can assist by providing professional development in setting up procedures to establish channels of communication, and identifying systematic approaches for after school programs to make contacts and collaborations (e.g., communication logs, planners, email, meetings, and ideas for developing more collaborative program structures like overlap in day school and afterschool program staff, offering afterschool program staff paid time to communicate and work with day-school staff, and administrative support in creating connections to the day school).

Furthermore, state and local educational agencies can organize professional development opportunities for local afterschool programs to get together and share their experiences with each other; the state and federal program officers may even want to participate in specific professional development for the delivery of specific curricula together with their programs, so that they can have a realistic expectation of what the program can achieve and help set appropriate benchmarks.

Evaluation and assessment. As outlined in the logic model, continuous evaluation is necessary to gauge program performance and strive for continuous improvement. However, across the programs, evaluation was mostly used to gauge program impact and monitor student progress, using evaluation as a reflection to guide program improvement was not practiced as frequently, especially at the staff level. Professional development could stress the importance of this continuous feedback loop for the sustainability of program quality, and provide programs with the skills and tools to jump start this learning cycle. First, afterschool staff would need to develop strategies on how to locate/develop reliable self-assessment tools that can measure program growth and improvement. Once programs have the tools to assess program results, professional development should be provided on how to interpret findings and translate assessment results to improve afterschool programming and instructional practices. In addition, student assessment and tracking of student progress should also be a

priority in professional development. Through regular monitoring of student work and achievement, afterschool programs can have a better understanding of the needs of their students, and areas of support that need to be improved.

Parent involvement. In terms of parent involvement, although the research literature continuously stresses the importance of parent involvement in influencing children's academic outcomes, this study repeatedly found that parents, though very satisfied with the programs, were generally not involved in attending events or volunteering in afterschool programs. This finding is consistent with other literature on afterschool programs (Huang, et al., 2007; Huang, et al., 2006). These results suggest that perhaps perceived parent involvement and parent expectations are just as important as actual attendance at events. Although some parents may be less able to attend afterschool events due to circumstances such as long work hours, other children in the household, being a single parent, and not knowing how to be involved; parents may be highly involved in other ways such as giving their children access to educational resources (e.g., books, computers), and in emphasizing the importance of a good education. Some of the culturally specific ways of being involved may be just as important as attending school events especially for immigrant parents and parents who feel less efficacious in dealing with the educational system (Zhou & Kim, 2006).

Despite the structural constraints families conceivably face, professional development in the area of parent involvement can focus on training staff to view parent involvement as a broad set of behaviors that could involve not only attending school events, communicating with the afterschool staff, but also in providing resources to their children for learning, holding high expectations and aspirations for their children's education, and developing and employing social networks to gain information and links to educational opportunities. In understanding and supporting different styles of parental involvement, staff can build partnerships in various forms with parents in supporting the students. Furthermore, professional development can also be helpful in providing staff with ideas on how to develop rapport with parents, such as focusing on student strengths, maintaining frequent communication and contact, offering suggestions and strategies for different forms of parental involvement, emphasizing the importance of parent involvement, and giving parents a voice in afterschool programming decisions.

Afterschool Funding

Another area that can have important influences on the quality of afterschool programming is funding sources. In writing funding contracts, funding agencies can include

categories in the budgets specified for professional development, staff stability, and involvement with the day school and parents.

Professional development. As mentioned in the previous section, professional development is a necessity for afterschool staff. Funding agencies should create specific budgets for continuous staff development as a way to ensure that content staff will be adequately prepared and continuously updated with new information. If the goal of funders is to target professional development for specific staff members such as instructors, site coordinators, or coaches, it should be clearly specified in the contracts for afterschool programs. When allocating funding for training and professional development, the costs of staff time and the cost for the substitutes for the staff members attending professional development should be considered together with the overall cost of the training.

Staff stability. The study results also indicated that at these high functioning programs, staff turnover rate was considered to be low. Over 60% of the staff had between 1–7 years of experience at the current site and over 30% of the staff had over 4 years of experiences at the current site. Staff stability is important for relationship building, because staff members serve as constant role models and mentors in their students' lives and provide the basis for students to build trust, positive attitudes and efficacy toward learning. To reduce staff turnover rate in the afterschool field, funders and afterschool administrators should consider incentives for building morale such as rewards (further educational opportunities such as a grant for tuition) to the "outstanding afterschool team/teachers" nominated by parents, teachers, or the students. Furthermore, recognition for the outstanding performance of specific staff, a site, or program may also offer acknowledgement for high quality performance. A pay scale incentive for years of service and a possible career ladder would also help staff retention. Policy makers and legislators may consider retention plans that establish policies and legislation to recognize program workers' contributions to student success.

Involvement from day school and parents. In order to ensure linkages between the afterschool programs and day school, some formal agreements should be made prior to the inception of the grant/contract writing. For example, the administration at the day school can connect to certain conditions and resources, such as granting the use of certain facilities at the school, providing time for school teachers and afterschool staff to meet and plan lessons together, establishing a system of communication, etc. (e.g., homework log between day-school teachers and afterschool staff). Funding agencies can budget additional resources for afterschool programs that would facilitate these linkages with school. For instance, the budget may include a person designated as the day-school liaison who can establish a chain of intentional communication and collaboration with the day school. Additional funding for

relationship building such as staff retreats or workshops (together with day-school teachers) can also be a way to form collaborative relationships.

Similarly, to develop relationships and opportunities for parent involvement, funding agencies should budget for parent participation, time for staff to communicate and collaborate with parents, and resources for families. Funding allocated to providing childcare during parent events, (e.g., ESL, parenting, other educational classes, Open Houses, parent-teacher conferences) will facilitate parent participation. Home visits and family assistance can further solidify the relationships between the afterschool and the families.

The importance of parent involvement specific to afterschool programs and student outcomes should be studied further and more rigorously. If the importance of the relationships is confirmed, policies can be set to encourage parents to make certain contributions of their time when their children enroll in the program. It should be noted that parents' contribution of time should not always require time spent at the program site; a project that the parents work on with their children at home can also be considered as parent involvement.

Continuous Evaluation

Continuous evaluation is an important component of high quality afterschool programs. Implications of our findings in this area suggest a need for more systematic evaluation, enforced through local and federal policies and regulations. Specifically, the use of evaluation tools in program planning, curriculum development, and general improvements can lead to improved student outcomes. This section will discuss implications at the classroom level and at the program organization level.

Classroom assessment. Research literature has consistently referred to standards-based curriculum and research-based instructional strategies as key components of high quality afterschool programs. To ensure that students are benefiting from the curriculum and instruction, periodic student assessments and program evaluations ought to be conducted. However, the findings of this study indicated that student assessment was not a common practice across even these high performing programs. In general, at the 53 programs, student assessments were characterized as informal, and in forms of spot checking, questioning and observing students' understanding. Qualitative findings further revealed that many staff and site coordinators were not familiar with assessment and evaluative tools, and did not have a clear understanding of their purposes.

At the afterschool classroom level, periodic assessment should be conducted and focused on monitoring student progress and achievement. Professional development can

provide opportunities for afterschool staff to review and understand the purposes and importance of assessment and evaluations in relation to student outcomes. Reliable and simple evaluation and assessment tools need to be developed and used regularly by the afterschool classroom and administrative staff. Program staff can also be trained and encouraged to conduct self-assessments to understand their own knowledge of the curriculum, and their strengths or weaknesses in implementing the curriculum through research-based practices. By implementing more formal and periodic student evaluations, afterschool programs can better gauge student learning and strategically connect student test scores to the curriculum, as well as make programmatic improvements to better meet student needs.

Program organization evaluation. At the program level, program directors and site coordinators need to clearly define the purposes of evaluations, so that program staff can actively participate in them; for example, assessment information can be used for self-improvement in program planning and curriculum development, other internal evaluations can be used to guide relationship building, administrative procedures, and resource allocation. Through periodic and systematic evaluations, afterschool staff can be made aware of their areas of strengths and weaknesses, and make informed decisions based on the evaluation findings. For instance, under the topic of staffing, self-evaluation tools can be used to understand staff professional development needs, staff utilization of research-based activities, and staff knowledge of standards-based curriculum. Using these assessment results, program directors can implement changes, allocate resources, and design professional development opportunities to further staff expertise in the needed areas.

In addition, multiple perspectives should be sought when gathering evaluation data. Programs need to be encouraged to request parent, student, and community input when evaluating program components. The results of these evaluations ought to serve more than accountability needs, with the interpretation of the findings also guiding continuous program improvement. Consequently, not only will evaluation help programs run smoothly, but they can be conducive to positive relationships with parents, students, and community members by giving them voices in program planning and improvement.

Furthermore, state and federal guidelines can be established to support programs in their evaluation process. Policymakers can require programs to engage in periodic evaluations, document their progress, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and submit a plan for change (such as curriculum modifications and adaptations to meet student needs and enhance the program outcomes) in addition to the programs' accountability reports. As part of the guidelines, a system for interpretation of program results ought to be in place for

programs to structure their findings and reset their goals each year. Administrative staff should be given opportunities to be trained in conducting self-assessments of their programs, as well how to translate assessment results into program improvement plans.

State coordinators can also benefit by participating in evaluation professional development. This development may provide additional efficacy and understanding about the functioning of afterschool programs and create further clarity when the coordinators review the programs' periodic reports. The state coordinators can make use of the findings in the reports to monitor and initiate conversations with the programs, building rapport with the programs by providing support and resources during the programs' development as part of the collaborative efforts.

Finally, to initiate and facilitate the process of self evaluation, this study included an assessment guide (attached in Appendix B) based on the instruments developed for this study. These self-assessment instruments will lead practitioners toward the goal of ongoing evaluation and program improvement. Furthermore, this toolkit can also provide knowledge and concrete benchmarks to inform stakeholders including practitioners, funding agencies, program officers, local education agencies, and policy makers on the progress that the programs are making. Stakeholders can make use of the tool to establish standardized expectations for afterschool programs and make data-based decisions in setting policies and making appropriations. These standards can be used to monitor and evaluate program effectiveness and improvement, as well as allow for the sharing of resources and ideas on how to best meet these expectations.

Contributions of the Partnership

Other than the contributions that this report brings, the Afterschool Partnership has also constructed and been maintaining a web site that houses the toolkits for the six content areas (math, reading, science, arts, technology, and homework help). These toolkits have been widely used by practitioners, and directly address some of the specified practices identified in this study. The toolkits on the six content areas are available at the site: www.sedl.org/afterschool. The instruments for the self-assessment guide are attached in the Appendix.

Providing Assistance Through Toolkits

One of the major goals for this 5-year study is to offer strategies, tools, and technical assistance to help address two continuing challenges to afterschool programs: (a) ensuring that programs offer high quality, research-based academic content utilizing appropriate

methods of teaching and learning; and (b) ensuring that programs are able to attract and retain students who participate regularly and thus can benefit from these investments.

Ensuring that Programs Offer High Quality, Researched-based Academic Content Utilizing Appropriate Methods of Teaching and Learning

In assisting afterschool programs to overcome these challenges, the Afterschool Partnership synthesized the study findings on effective practices, and developed toolkits for the six content areas under study. These toolkits can provide assistance to programs in ensuring high quality, standards-based academic content, and in utilizing research-based teaching and learning strategies. Through the use of the Afterschool Toolkit, concrete strategies are provided to help practitioners build program and staff capacity. The Toolkit further offers suggestions, illustrations, and demonstrations on how programs can embed academic learning in all aspects of afterschool activities. During the 5 years of this contract, the Toolkit has been consistently revised and updated as data and findings from the Partnership became available and as the broader research literature evolved. In addition, professional development on the use of the Toolkit has been continuously provided in national and regional afterschool conferences and workshops. Feedback gathered from these professional development events is also used to continuously improve the Toolkit.

Ensuring that Programs are Able to Attract and Retain Students Who Participate Regularly and Thus Can Benefit from these Investments

With current policies and laws that point to the accountability of Extra Learning Opportunities (ELO), the National Partnership's self-assessment guide (based on the instruments developed for this study) provides practitioners with a vital resource for self-evaluation. This toolkit includes instruments for programs to examine their curriculum content and instructional practices in the six content areas, and offers general guidelines on effective program management and administration. It will help programs to make informed decisions on developing strategies to attract and retain students. The contribution of the Partnership is illustrated in the Figure 14.

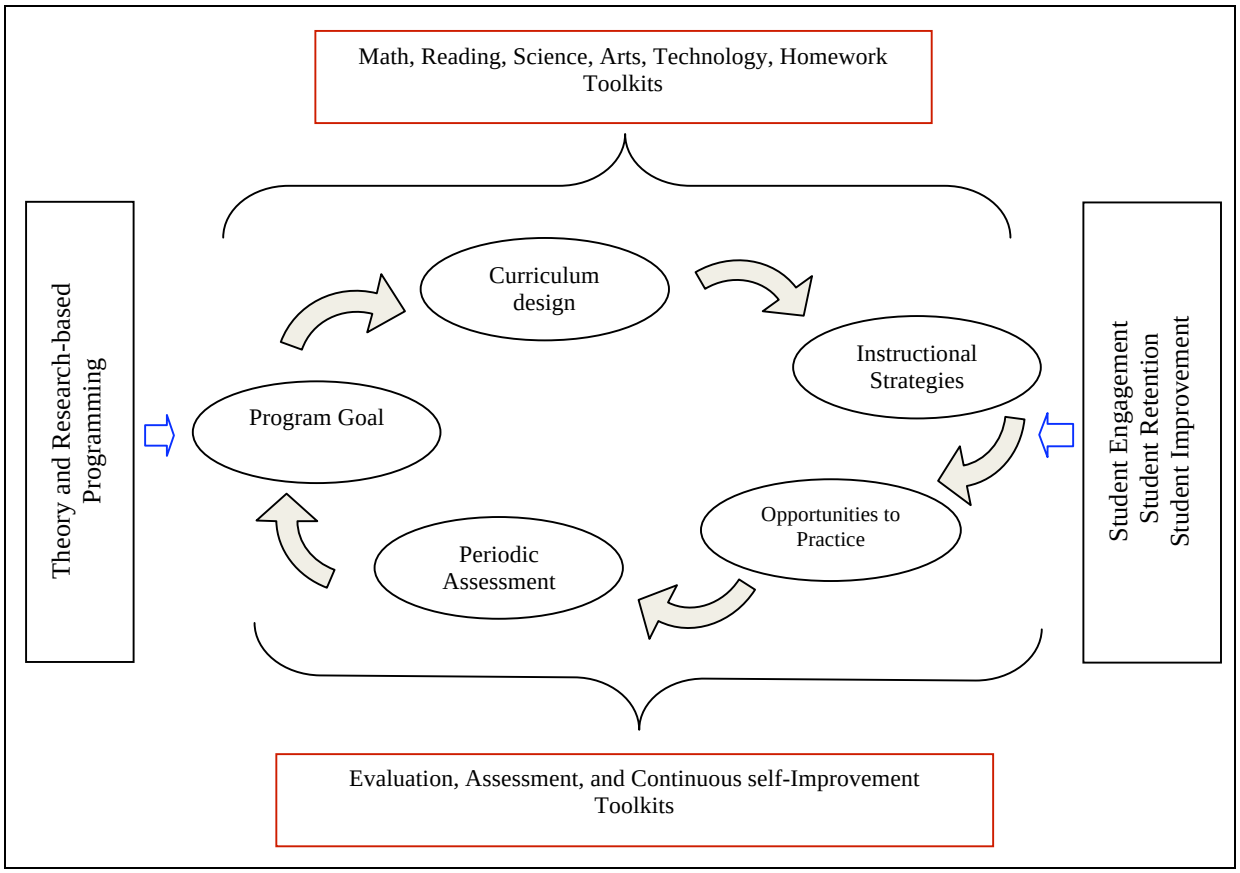


Figure 14. The Toolkits and the Continuous Self Improvement Model.

As illustrated in Figure 14, with the Toolkit, the Afterschool Partnership offers self-improvement opportunities for afterschool programs in all essential program components including curriculum design, instructional strategies, opportunities to practice (e.g. suggestions for project durations, follow-up activities, project extension possibilities), periodic assessments, and use of the results of the assessments to fine-tune the program goals. In the future this system can be further expanded and enhanced to include professional development and instruments on goal setting and provide a set of validated rubrics (perhaps also an analytical software to provide simple statistical results for the programs) so that education agencies, funding agencies, and policy makers can use the toolkits to establish standardized expectations for afterschool programs. At least once a year, afterschool programs should take stock of their progress and make plans for refinement. This process will empower sites to make grounded decisions and to improve their program performance.

Limitations

Although the findings of this study have implications for afterschool programming and future research, a number of limitations should be noted. First, the program participants in this study were carefully selected and represented only a small portion of afterschool programs in the nation. Thus, the findings on this sample cannot be generalized to the afterschool field as a whole. Secondly, because this study sought to conduct extensive site visits and intensive data collection on programs that focused on multiple content areas, there were time lags between Year 1 and Year 3 of data collection. Coincidently, this was a period of tremendous development and growth, as afterschool activities were generating nationwide attention in education and political arenas. This drastic growth could have contributed to the differences in program content, structure, and practices across programs over the years. Audiences should keep this in mind while interpreting results from one year to the next. Finally, the purpose of this study was to identify the indicators of high quality afterschool programs within the six content areas. Due to the differences in context, a discontinuity of the study design was observed which makes the longitudinal comparisons more difficult.

Conclusion

The Partnership has successfully accomplished the five major tasks for this project aimed at improving the delivery and quality of academic content, teaching, and professional development in afterschool programs. Fifty-three high functioning programs representative across eight regional divisions of the nation, including rural and urban programs, community-based and school district related programs, were identified using rigorous methods. Exemplary practices in program organization, program structure, and especially in content delivery were studied. The findings were synthesized into the Afterschool Toolkit that was made available to programs nationwide via the world-wide-web. Professional development was conducted consistently and extensively throughout the nation.

To conclude the report, the Partnership will provide a “success story” from one of the technology programs:

> *XXX kids have become leaders in the day school because of their advanced technology skills and increased confidence. XXX kids represented the school at the State Superintendent’s Technology Day at the State Capitol this last winter!*

Technology is a part of the environment at this program. The program’s goal is not to “teach technology” but to use technology to engage students in their learning and to help the

students to become more successful in school. They have certainly aligned and structured their resources and achieved their goal!

Using the Toolkit and self-improvement model (as shown earlier in Figure 14) to self-monitor and enhance the program environment, curriculum content, and instructional strategies, all programs will have the capacity and potential to achieve their goal.

REFERENCES

Bempechat, J., Graham, S. E., & Jiminez, N. V. (1999, Mar). The socialization of achievement in poor and minority students: A comparative study. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 30*(2), 139–158.

Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R., R. (Eds.). (2000). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Brofenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Confrey, J. (1994). Splitting, similarity, and the rate of change: New approaches to multiplication and exponential functions. In G. Harel & J. Confrey (Eds.), *The development of multiplicative reasoning in the learning of mathematics* (pp. 293–332). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Clayton, C. (2004). *Evaluating supplemental educational service providers: Issues and challenges*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL).

Dynarski, M., Moore, M., Mullens, J., Gleason, P., James-Burdumy, S., Rosenberg, L., … Levy, D. (2003). *When schools open late: The National evaluation of the 21st century community learning centers program, first-year findings.* Report submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research.

Fashola, O. (2002). *Building effective after school programs*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Goldschmidt, P., Huang, D., & Chinen, M. (2007). *The long-term effects of after-school programming on educational adjustment and juvenile crime: A study of the LA's BEST after-school program* (Unpublished Manuscript). Los Angeles: University of California, National Center for Research, on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST).

Grossman, J. B., Price, M. L., Fellerath, V., Jucovy, L. Z., Kotloff, L. J., Raley, R., & Walker, K. E. (2002). *Multiple choices afterschool: Findings from the Extended-service Schools Initiative.* Philadelphia, PA: Public/ Private Ventures.

Hall, G., Yohalem, N., Tolman, J., & Wilson, A. (2003). *How after school programs can most effectively promote positive youth development as a support to academic achievement: A report commissioned by the Boston After-School for All Partnership.* (Rev. ed.). Wellesley, MA: National Institute on Out-of-School Time.

Huang, D., Coordt, A., La Torre, D., Leon, S., Miyoshi, J., Pérez, P., & Peterson, P. (2007). *The afterschool hours: Examining the relationship between afterschool staff-based social capital and student engagement in LA's BEST* (CSE Tech. Rep. No. 712). Los Angeles: University of California, National Center for Research, on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST).

Huang, D., Gribbons, B., Kyung, S. K., Lee, C., & Baker, E. L. (2000). *A decade of results: The impact of LA's BEST after-school enrichment program on subsequent student achievement and performance* (Unpublished Manuscript). Los Angeles: University of California, National Center for Research, on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST).

Huang, D., Miyoshi, J., La Torre, D., Marshall, A., Pérez, P., & Peterson, C. (2006). *Exploring the intellectual, social and organizational capitals at LA's BEST (CSE Tech. Rep. No. 714).* Los Angeles: University of California, National Center for Research, on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST).

Ingvarson, L, Meiers, M, & Beavis, A. (2005). Factors affecting the impact of professional development programs on teachers' knowledge, practice, student outcomes and efficacy. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 13*(10).

Lamare, J. (1997). *Sacramento START: An evaluation report*. Sacramento, CA: Sacramento California Neighborhoods Planning and Development Services Department.

Mahoney, J. L., Lord, H., & Carryl, E. (2005). An ecological analysis of after-school program participation and the development of academic performance and motivational attributes for disadvantaged children. *Child Development, 76*, 811–825.

Miller, B. M. (1995). Out-of-school time: Effects on learning in the primary grades (Action Research Paper No. 4, School-Age Child Care Project) Wellesley, MA: Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College.

Miller, B. M. (2003). *Critical hours: Afterschool programs and educational success*. Quincy, MA: Nellie Mae Education Foundation.

Munoz, M. A. (2002). *Outcome-based community-school partnerships: The impact of the after-school programs on non-academic and academic indicators.* Louisville, KY: Retrieved from ERIC database. (ED468973)

Noam, G. G., Biancarosa, G., & Dechausay, N. (2002). *Learning beyond school: A white paper.* Cambridge, MA: The Program in After School Education and Research, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, § 115 Stat. 1425 (2002).

Piaget, J.-P. (1952). *The origins of intelligence in children*. New York: International Universities Press

Piaget, J.-P. (1964). *Six psychological studies.* New York: Vintage.

Pierce, K. M., Hamm, J. V., & Vandell, D. L. (1999). Experiences in after school programs and children's adjustment in first-grade classrooms. *Child Development, 70*, 756–67.

Posner, J. K., & Vandell, D. L. (1994). Low-income children's after-school care: Are there beneficial effects of after-school programs? *Child Development, 65*, 440–456.

Bodilly, S., & Beckett, M. K. (2005). *Making out-of-school time matter: Evidence for an action agenda.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Ryan, R. M., & Grolnick, W. S. (1986). Origin and pawns in the classroom: Self-report and projective assessments of individual differences in children's perceptions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 50*, 550–558.

Scott-Little, C., Hamann, M. S., & Jurs, S. G. (2002). Evaluations of after school programs: A meta-evaluation of methodologies and narrative summary findings. *American Journal of Evaluation, 23*(4), 387–419.

Rossi, R. & Montgomery, A. (Eds.). (1994, January). *Education reforms and students at risk: A review of the current state of the art.* Washington DC: U. S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EdReformStudies/EdReforms/chap5b.html

Statistics Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). (2007). [Computer Software]. Chicago: Author

U.S. Department of Education & U.S. Department of Justice. (2000). *Working for children and families: Safe and smart after school programs.* Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). Interaction between learning and development (pp. 79-91). *In mind in society* (Trans. M. Cole). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Zhou, M & Kim, S. S. (2006, Spring). Community forces, social capital, and educational achievement: The case of supplementary education in the Chinese and Korean immigrant communities. *Harvard Educational Review, 76*(1), 1–29.

APPENDIX A

Goal Setting and Curriculum Practices:

Standards-based Instruction

Table A

Percentage of Instructors' Use of Standards-based Reading Instruction

Reading contents	Yes %	No %
Print representation of spoken language.	92	8
Recognizing common text features such as headings, key words, charts.	89	11
Demonstrating awareness of sound-symbol relationships.	88	12
Understanding alphabetic principles (that each letter represents a sound).	89	11
Applying decoding to comprehend text (e.g., breaking apart words to understand meaning).	92	8
Reading silently or aloud with fluency (smoothly and easily).	96	4
Self-monitoring/self-correcting reading.	85	15
Vocabulary development.	96	4
Identifying literary devices (e.g., simile, metaphor).	82	18
Understanding antonyms/synonyms.	82	18
Using glossaries, table of contents, chapter headings, and indexes to locate information.	82	18
Applying phonetic strategies to make meaning from text.	91	9
Applying decoding to comprehend text.	91	9
Developing pre-reading strategies.	91	9
Understanding textual features.	82	18
Understanding prefixes, suffixes, and affixes.	85	15
Using pictures and context cues to understand meanings of words.	91	9
Identifying homophones and homographs.	82	18
Understanding story components.	88	12
Self-monitoring for comprehension.	94	6
Making inferences using evidence.	88	12
Reading a variety of literary genres.	89	11
Researching topics using a variety of materials.	74	27
Using text features such as lists, indices, headings.	69	31
Identifying/using text organizational structures to gain meaning from text.	72	28
Applying self-correcting strategies to decode text.	55	45
Making predictions/drawing conclusions.	76	24

table continues

Table A *(continued)*

Reading contents	Yes %	No %
Self-monitoring for reading.	76	24
Vocabulary development.	83	17
Identifying figurative and literary devices.	75	25
Analyzing the purpose of different literary texts.	61	39
Understanding literary techniques.	61	39
Developing and investigating research questions.	61	39
Producing book reports or other written projects.	45	55

Table B

Percentage of Instructors' Use of Standards-based Math Instruction

Math contents	Yes %	No %
Concepts of numbers (e.g., whole numbers, ordinal and cardinal numbers, fractions).	92	8
Addition and subtraction of whole numbers.	100	0
Pattern recognition (e.g., through sorting/classification of objects or sounds).	100	0
Basic conventional math symbols (e.g., plus and minus sign, equals sign).	100	0
Basic spatial relationships (e.g., drawing and describing objects).	100	0
Basic concepts of change (e.g., understanding that amount of change can be quantified).	100	0
Basic measurement concepts (e.g., length, volume, weight, area, time).	85	15
Understanding/application of fractions, decimals, percentages.	93	7
Multiplication and division.	94	6
Understanding of patterns (using numbers or shapes).	93	7
Using equations to express relationships between numbers.	100	0
Using graphs, tables, or other graphic representations.	100	0
Working with 2- and 3-dimensional shapes.	88	12
Basic measurement (length, area, weight, volume).	88	12
Designing studies and collecting data.	88	12
Using fractions, decimals, and percentages.	50	50
Using ratios and proportions.	50	50
Using tables or graphs to represent/analyze problems.	50	50
Understanding/applying basic geometric concepts such as angles, side length, perimeter, area.	50	50
Formulas for areas of more complex shapes (e.g., triangles, parallelograms, trapezoids, circles, pyramids, cylinders).	50	50
Problem solving using equations.	50	50
Designing small research studies.	100	0
Understanding/applying mean, range, and median.	50	50
Representing data in charts, such as histograms, scatter plots, or box plots.	100	0

Table C

Percentage of Instructors Use of Standards-based Arts Instruction

Arts content	Yes %	Don't Know %
Create arts experiences expressing self or environment.	85	8
Apply art techniques and processes.	93	0
Make connections to history and culture.	67	15
Engage students in analyzing and communicating.	82	4
Integrate the arts with other subjects.	58	27
Use technology as a creative tool.	33	15
Listen to, analyze, describe music.	59	15
Sing in groups or individually.	67	15
Play a musical instrument.	41	15
Learn skills in theatre arts performances.	59	7

Table D

Percentage of Instructors' Use of Standards-based Science Instruction

Science content	Yes %	Don't Know %
Understanding concepts of scientific inquiry	71	25
Properties / position / motion of objects.	60	38
Light, heat, electricity, magnetism.	54	39
Characteristics and life cycles of organisms.	68	26
Position and motion of objects.	57	38
Objects and changes in earth and sky.	56	33
Understanding of science/technology.	80	18
Personal health and nutrition.	77	16
Changes in populations and environments.	58	36
Changes in properties in matter.	66	30
Motions and forces.	65	29
Transfer of energy.	60	33
Structure / function of living systems.	58	30
Reproduction and heredity.	33	54
Regulation and behavior.	48	44
Populations and ecosystems.	49	35
Diversity and adaptations of organisms.	52	33
Structure of earth's system / solar system.	62	27
Populations /resources and environments.	51	41
Natural hazards, risks and benefits.	50	44
History of nature and science.	46	40

Table E

Percentage of Instructors' Use of Standards-based Technology Instruction

Technology contents	Yes %	Don't know %
Applying strategies to hardware and software.	60	13
Understanding the nature and operation of tech. systems.	87	7
Using tech while working independently.	81	13
Using tech to process data and report results.	50	21
Using tech. to collaborate with peers on projects.	63	19
Using telecom to collaborate with peers and others.	79	0
Using tech. resources for real-world problems and concerns.	80	0
Using tech as a tool for creative projects.	87	7
Using tech to locate, evaluate, and collect info.	88	13
Evaluating and selecting tech tools.	73	20
Practicing responsible behavior and use of tech.	100	0
Discuss consequences of misuse of tech systems.	86	7
Research and evaluate the accuracy and bias of electronic info.	43	36

APPENDIX B

Goal Setting and Curricular Practices:

Instructional Strategies

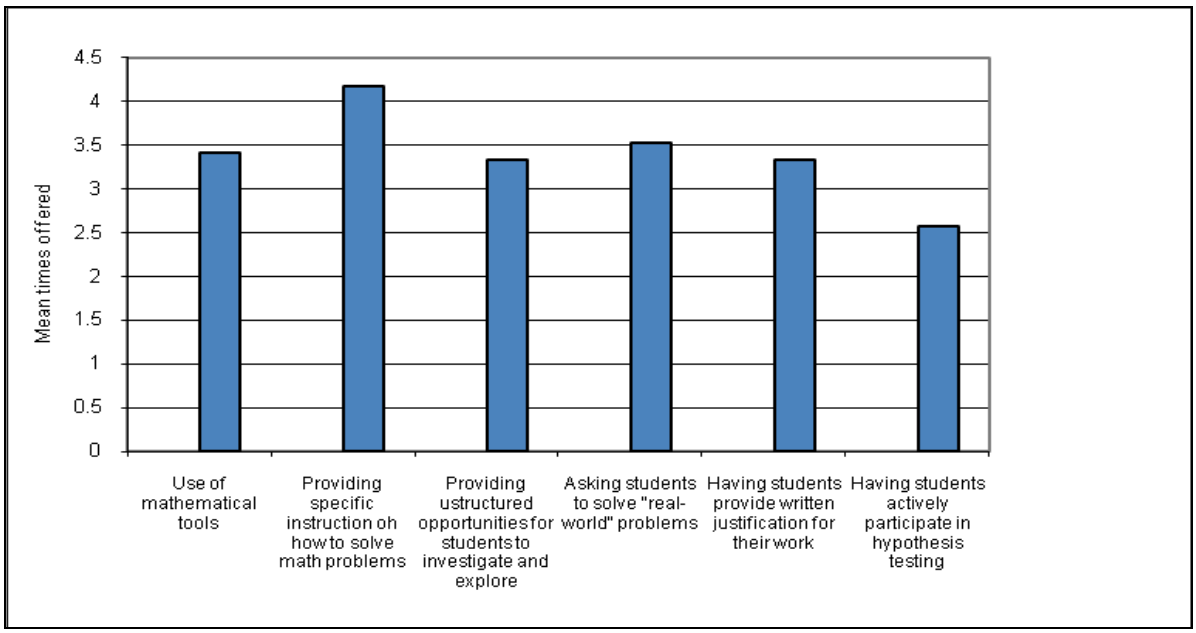


Figure A. Frequency of specific instructional practices in math program.

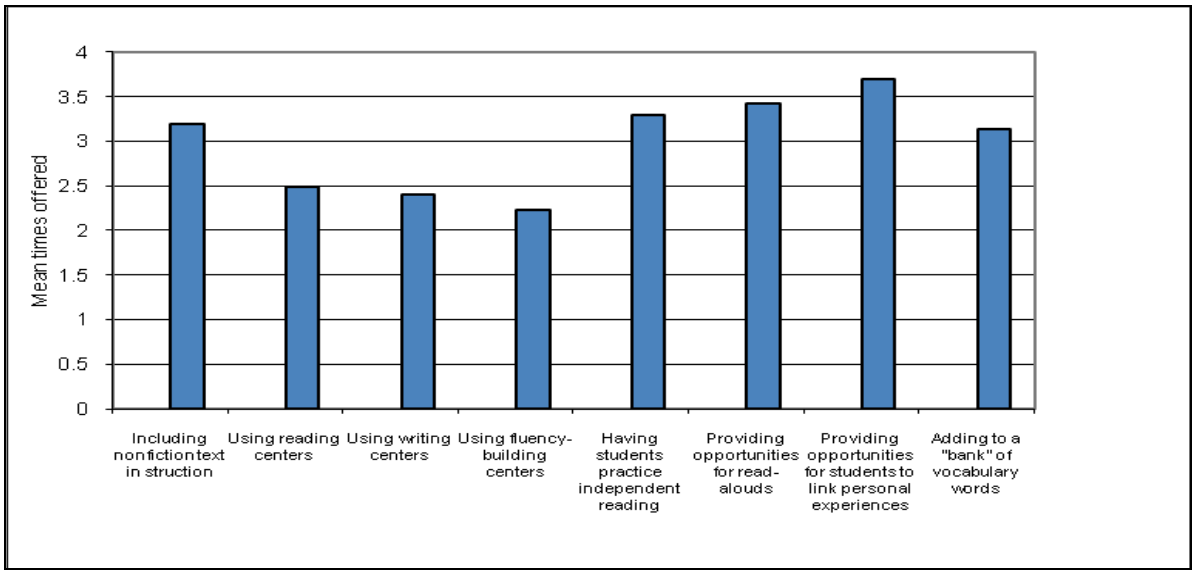


Figure B. Frequency of specific instructional practices in reading program.

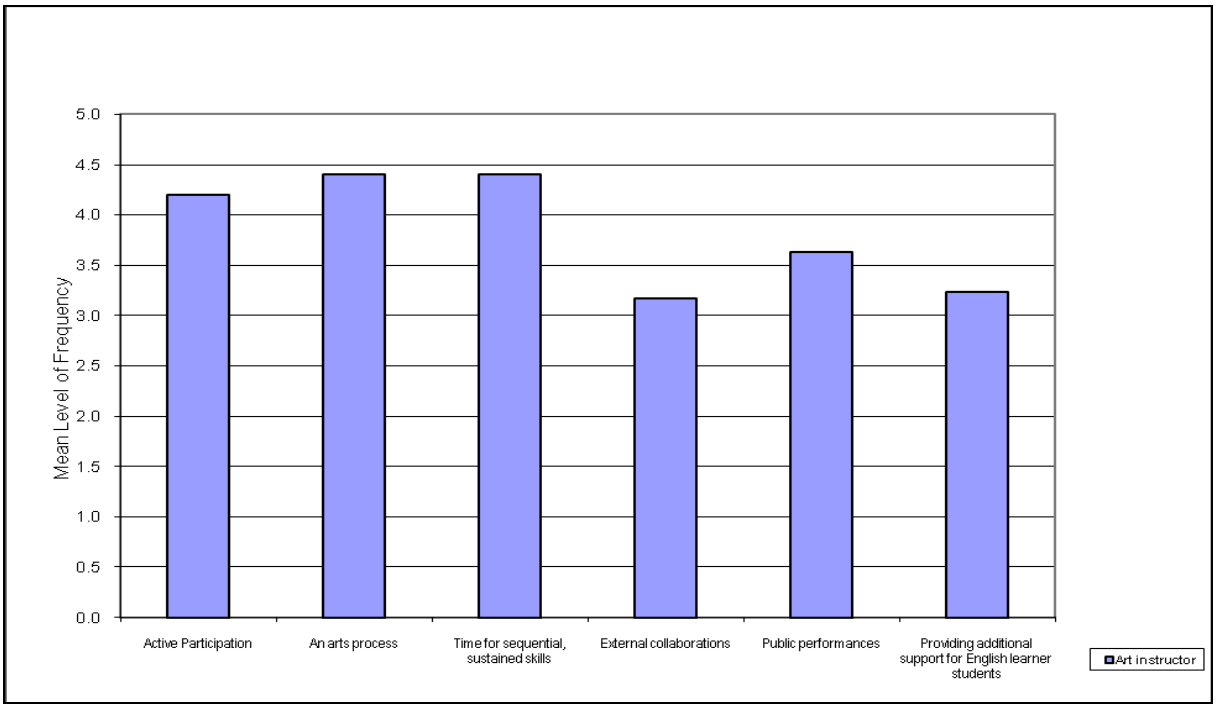


Figure C. Frequency of specific instructional practices in arts program.

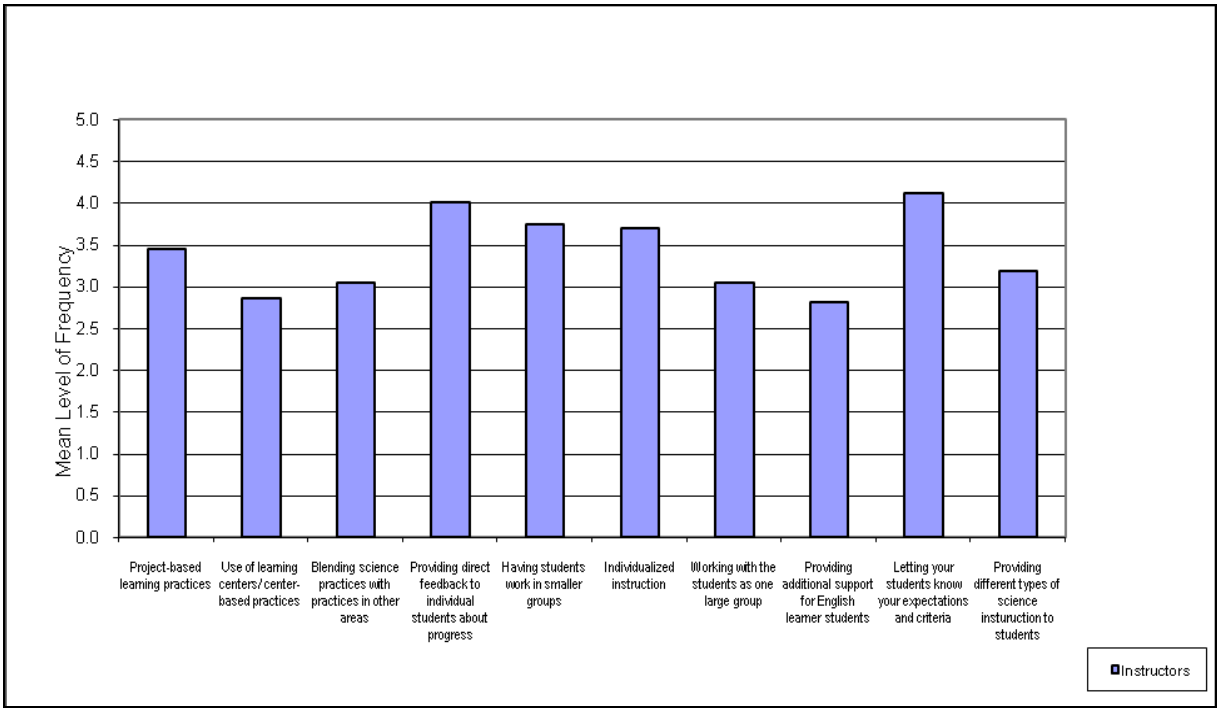


Figure D. Frequency of specific instructional practices in science program.

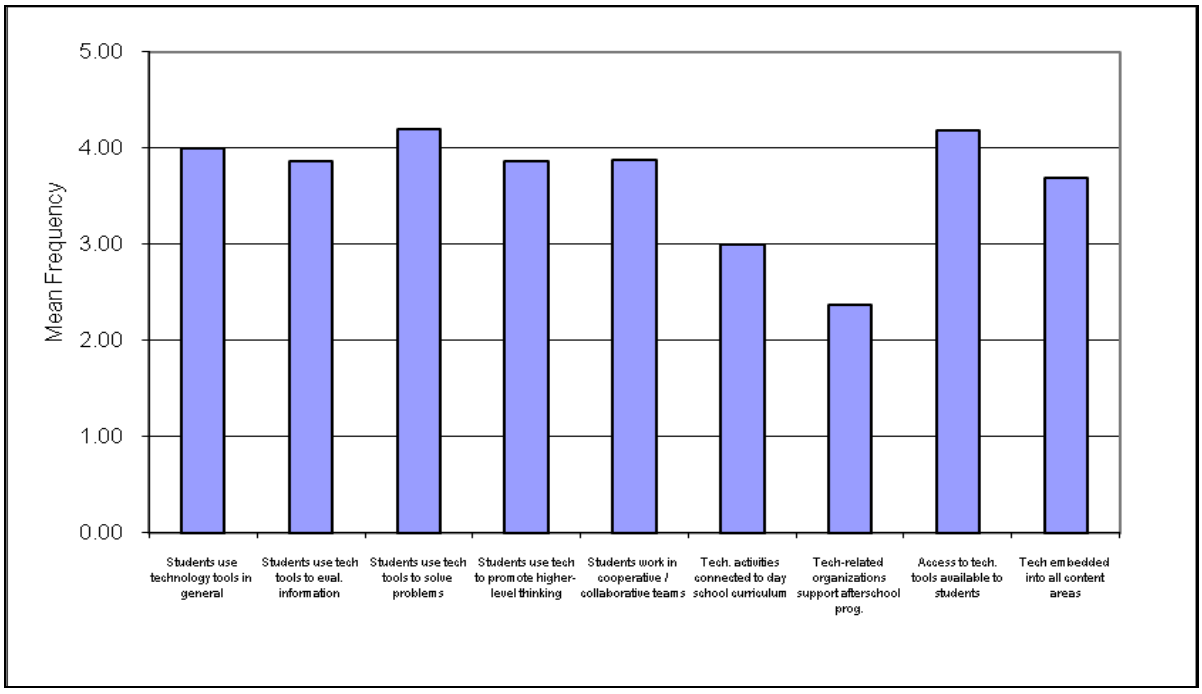


Figure E. Frequency of specific instructional practices in technology program.

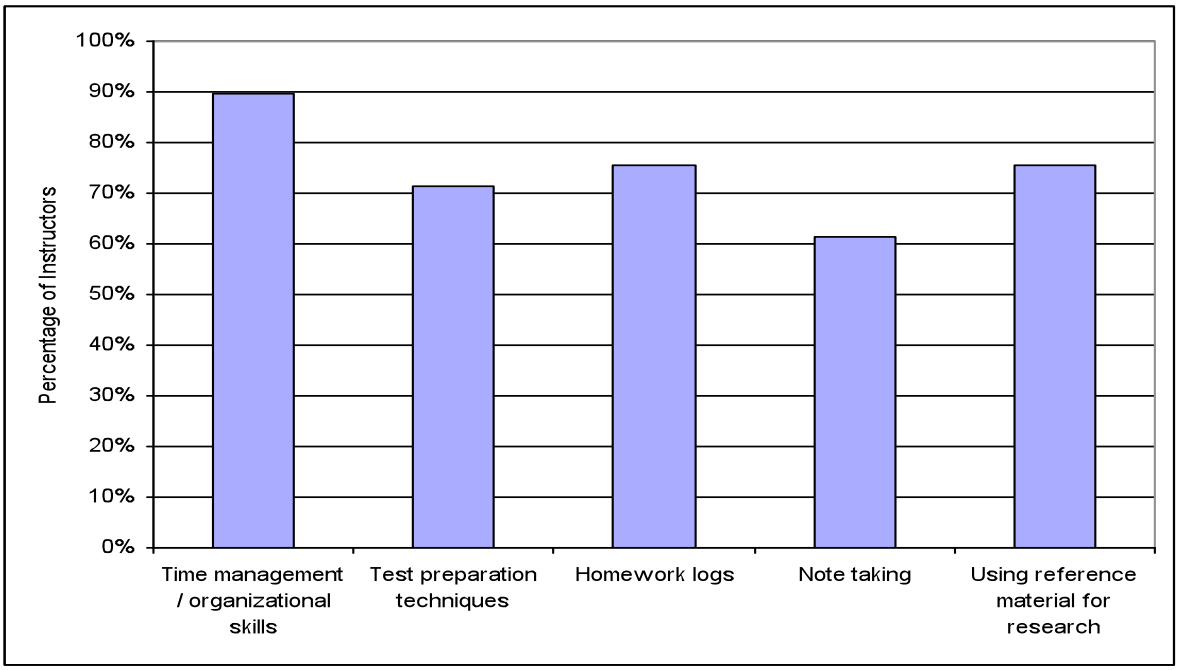


Figure F. Percentage of homework instructors engaged in strategies.

APPENDIX C

Evaluative Structures and Program Impact:

Day-school Teacher Perception of Changes (Figures G–J)

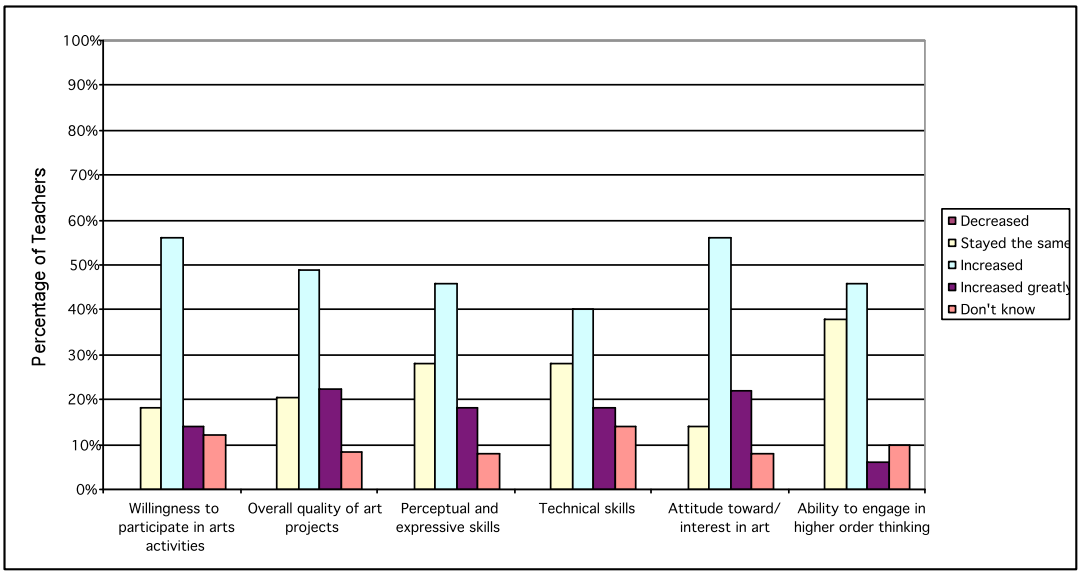


Figure G. Teacher perception of changes in student performance and attitude toward arts.

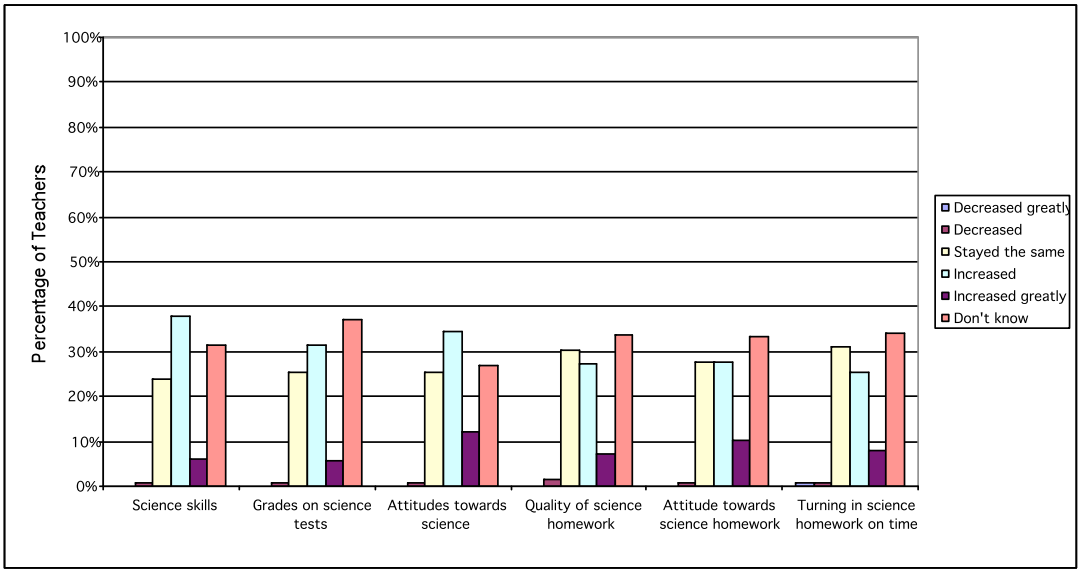


Figure H. Teacher perception of changes in student performance and attitude toward science.

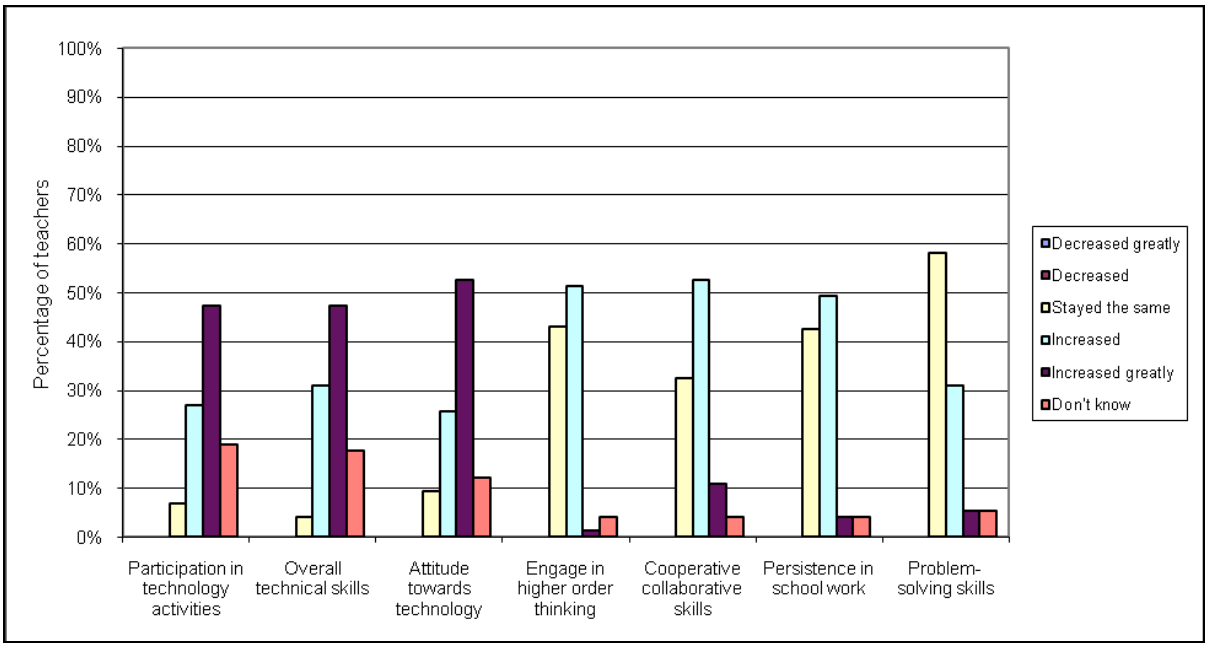


Figure I. Teacher perception of changes in student performance and attitude toward technology.

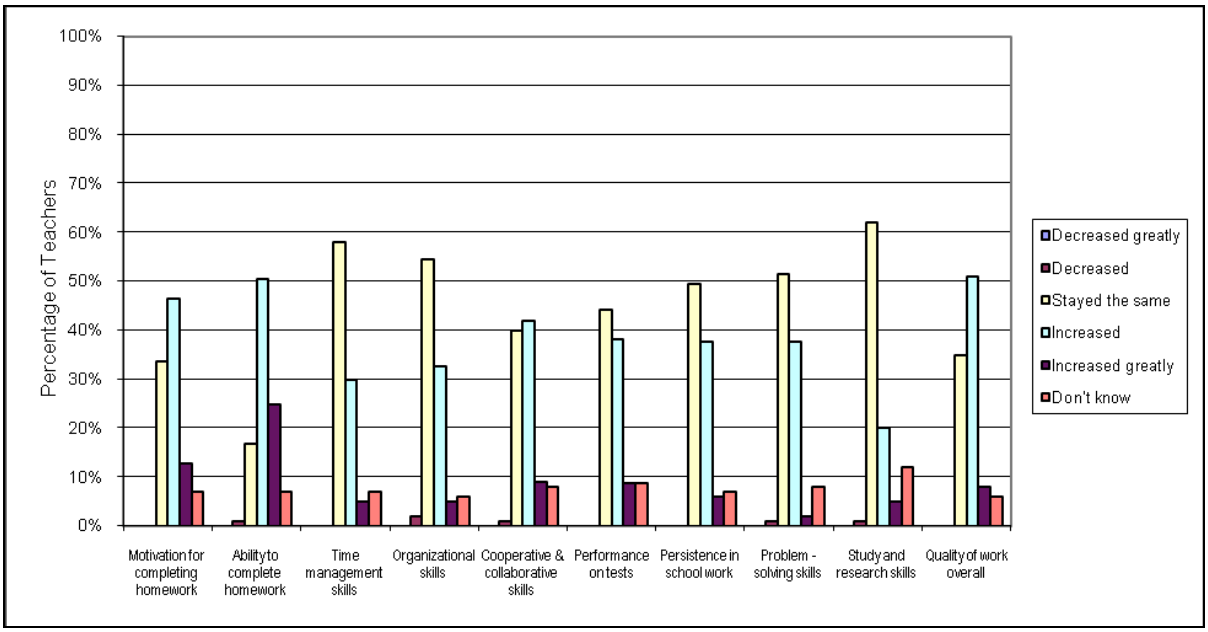
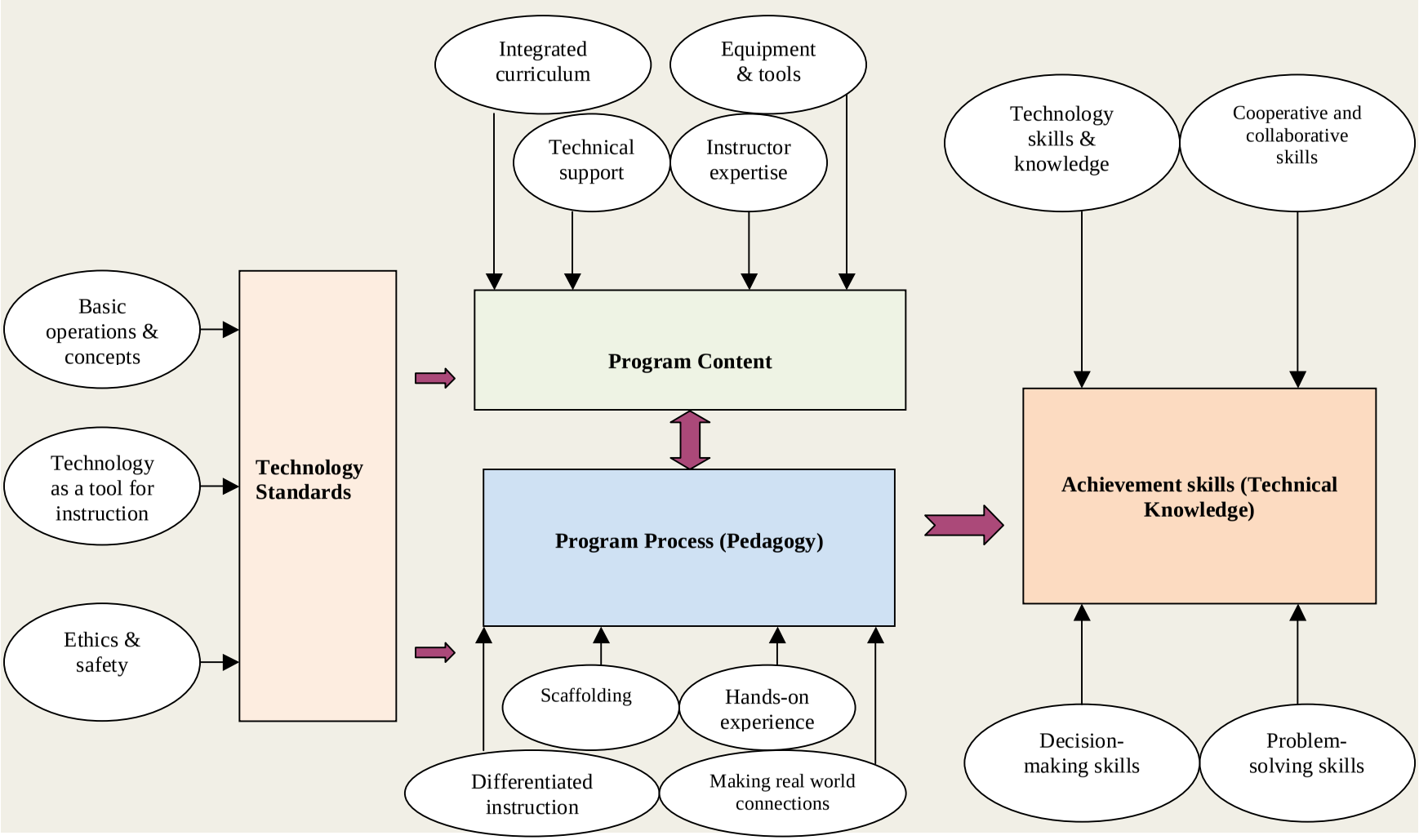


Figure J. Teacher perception of changes in student performance and attitude toward homework.

APPENDIX D

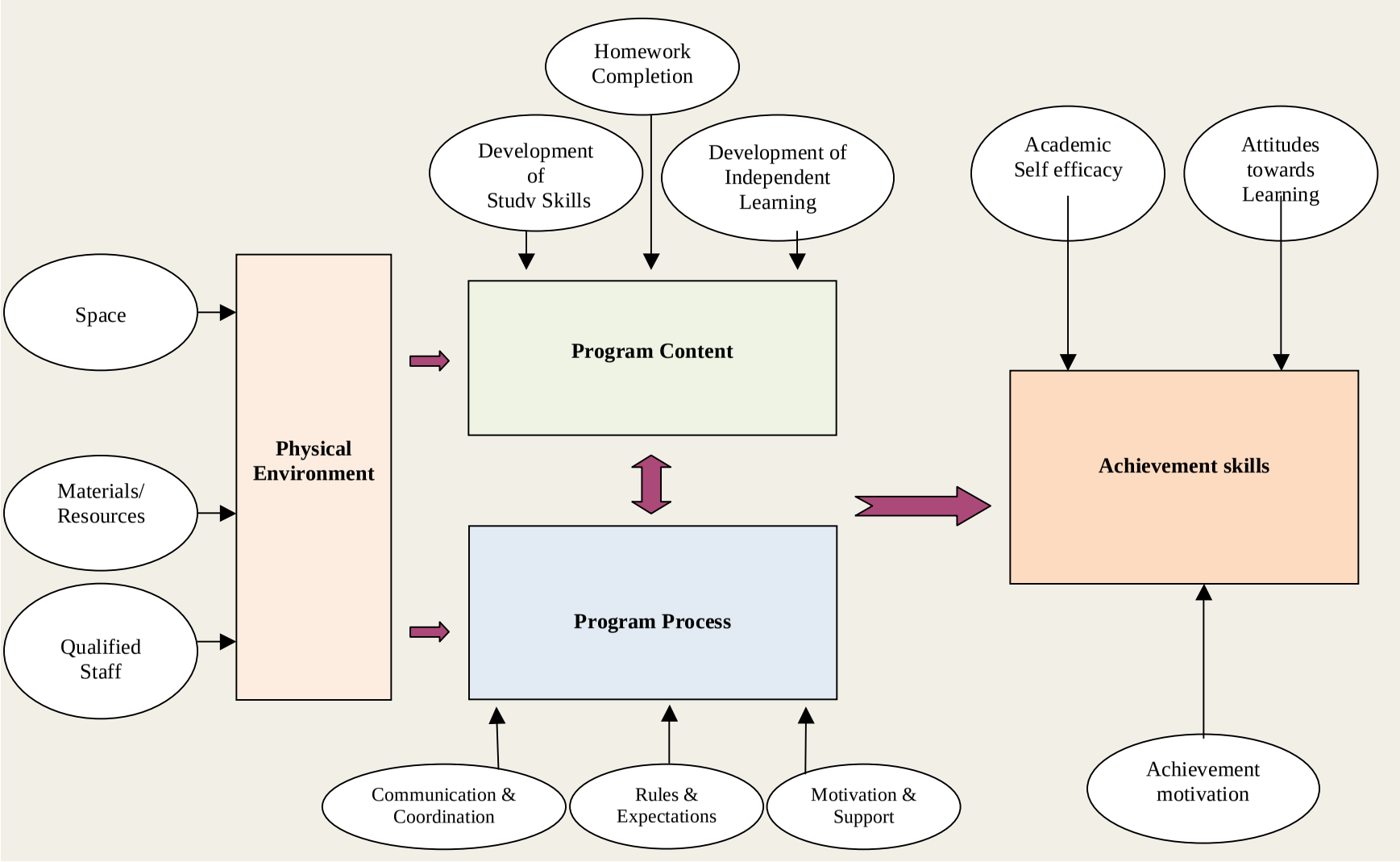
Validation Models by Contents

Technology Validation Model

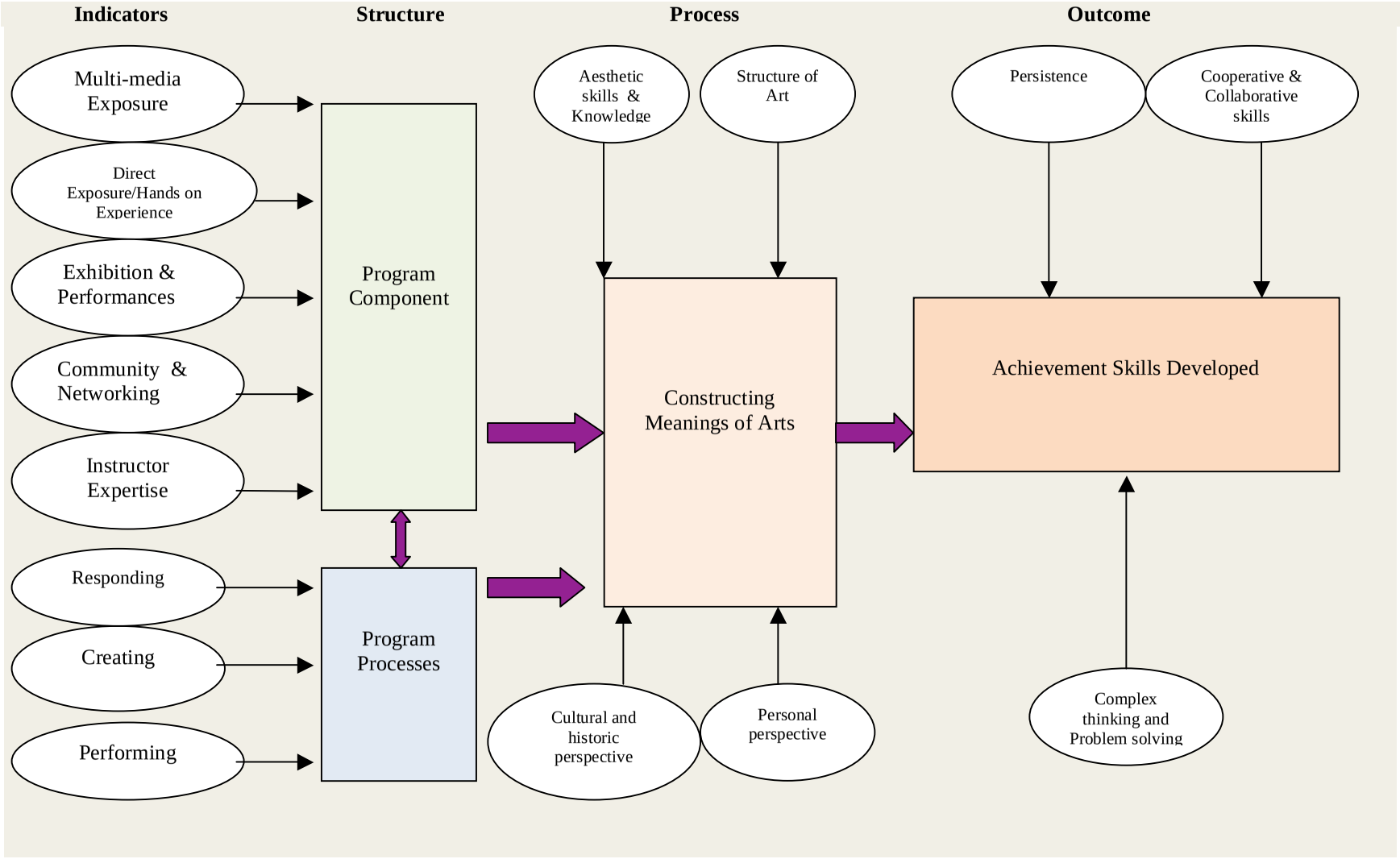


97

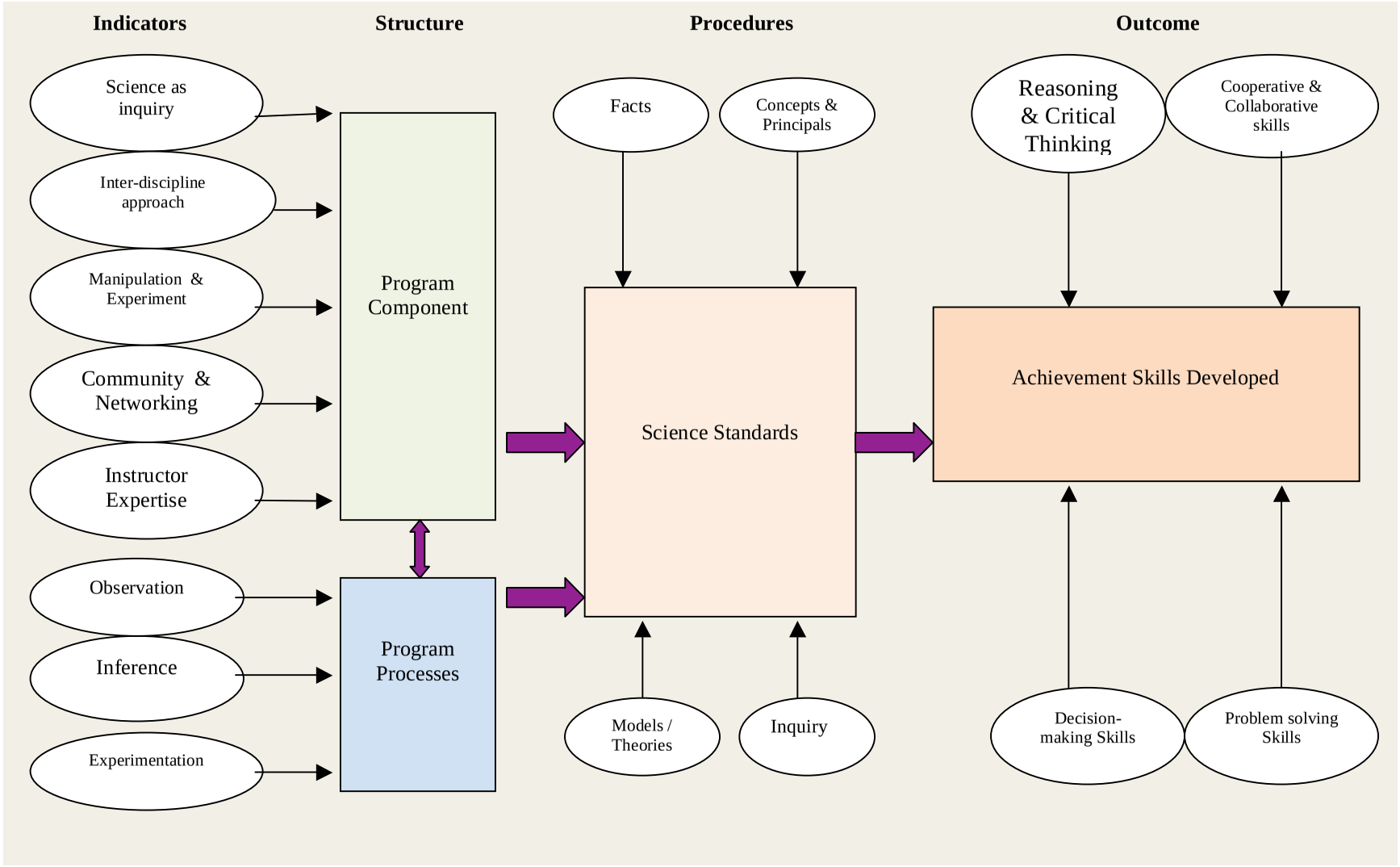
Homework Validation Model



Arts Validation Model

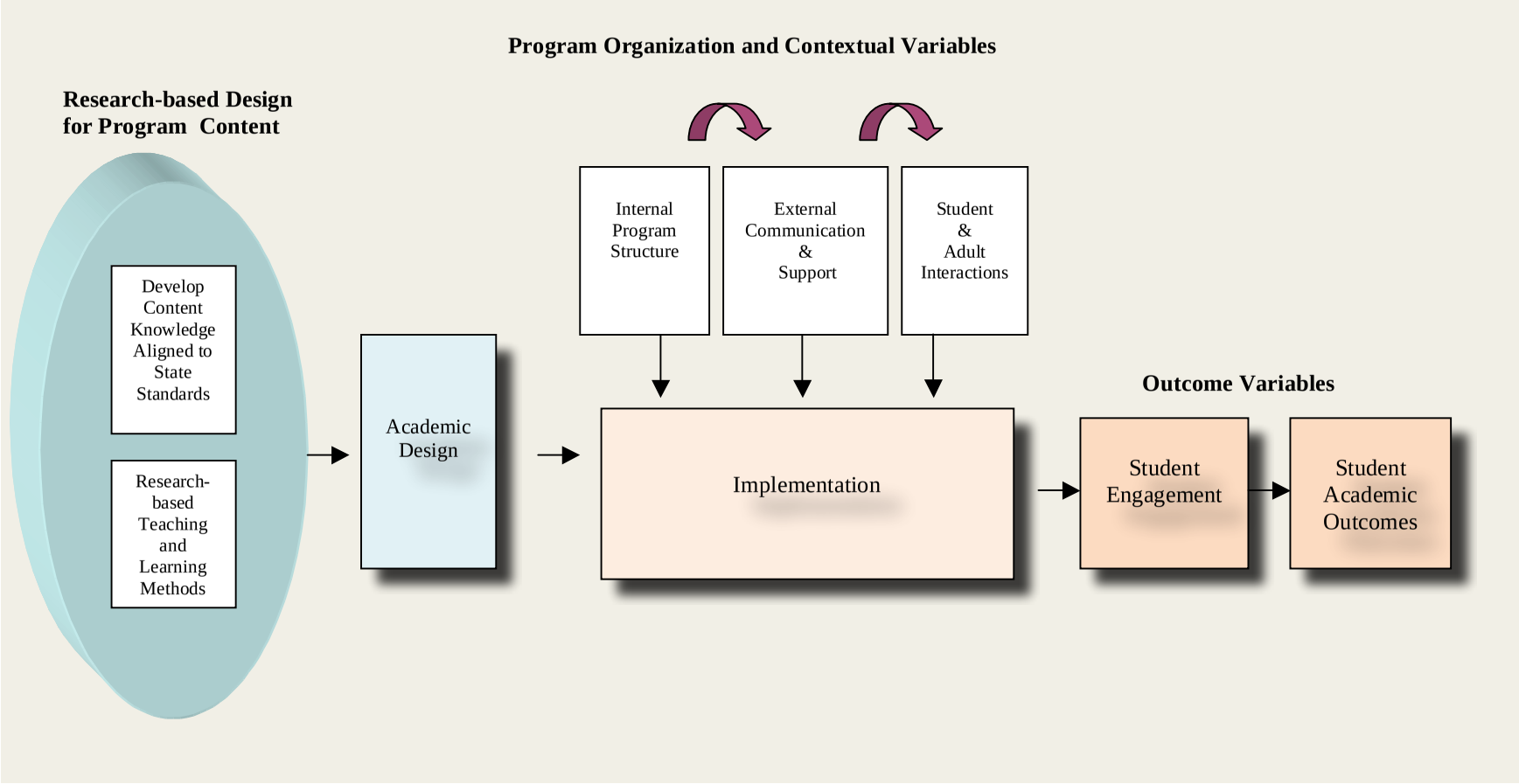


Science Validation Model



100

Math and Reading Validation Model



101

Work Experience

Table 1

Staff Experience at Math Programs

Years of Afterschool Program (ASP) experience	Site Coordinators *N* = 6	Instructors *N* = 37
Average years at current site	4.8	3.4
Average years at ASPs in general	5.0	3.5

Table 2

Staff Experience at Reading Programs

Years of Afterschool Program (ASP) experience	Site Coordinators *N* = 15	Instructors *N* = 110
Average years at current site	4.1	3.6
Average years at ASPs in general	4.6	3.8

As improvement of the study instruments, the scale for reporting work experiences for arts, science, technology, and homework were restructured. Percentages were calculated for each time periods for better representations.

Table 3

Work Experiences of Art Staff

Length of time working	In general	At current site
Less than a month	0%	3%
A few months	10%	31%
A year	7%	0%
1–3 years	33%	44%
4–7 years	20%	19%
More than 7 years	30%	03%

Table 4

Science Work Experience

Length of time working	Instructors	Instructors
Less than a month	0%	0%
A few months	12%	17%
A year	6%	6%
1–3 years	38%	30%
4–7 years	36%	26%
More than 7 years	8%	22%

Table 5

Work Experiences of Technology Staff (*N* = 16)

Length of time working	In general	At current site
A few months	13%	13%
A year	6%	13%
1–3 years	19%	38%
4–7 years	50%	31%
More than 7 years	13%	6%

Table 6

Work Experiences of Homework Instructors (*N* = 50)

Length of time working	In general	At current site
A few months	14%	20%
A year	8%	18%
1–3 years	36%	32%
4–7 years	28%	30%
More than 7 years	14%	0%

APPENDIX E

THE AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Denise Huang, Jamie Cho, and Hannah Nam, Christine Oh, Aletha Harven, and Seth Leon
CRESST/University of California, Los Angeles

The National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning (the Partnership) assists 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) grantees to build local capacity in academic contents to enhance students' learning. The goal of this assessment system is to provide afterschool directors and coordinators with on-site tools for self evaluations, data-based decision making, and informed program improvements.

Indicators for High Functioning Programs

The findings in the National Partnership Study indicated that the characteristics of the identified high functioning afterschool programs (i.e., programs that have demonstrated sustained student academic success) appeared to be in alignment with the criteria extracted for exemplary afterschool practices in terms of program structure, student engagement, instructional strategies, and issues of accountability. From the National Partnership Study, the common characteristics that were found across the identified afterschool programs were:

- These programs had strong leadership and established clear goals
- They aligned program structures and contents to meet those goals
- They set a schedule that allowed time for students to learn and practice
- They established relationships with the day school
- Their curriculum in general reflected a linkage to standards
- Most used research-based strategies
- They all maintained some form of evaluative structures
- Staff members had low turnover rates
- Staff members related well to the students
- Staff members had built rapport, maintained high expectations, and kept students motivated and engaged.

Assessment for Continuous Program Improvement

Quality afterschool programs are very concerned about the overall effectiveness of their programs and make assessment and evaluation an integral part of their functions. Evaluations

help programs to discover their strengths and weaknesses and determine areas where changes are needed. With careful refinement and constant monitoring of an afterschool plan, managers of afterschool programs can judge the efficacy of their efforts based on established, accepted goals for the program and improve their effectiveness in promoting student outcomes.

Based on the Partnership Study, self-assessment survey questionnaires are prepared for individual program use. Since the main focus of this study is on the instructional features of the six content areas (math, reading science, arts, technology, and homework assistance), separate instruments are prepared for each individual contents. A more generic and condensed kit for self-assessing the program environment and management is provided in Exhibit 1, where a rubric for scoring is also included. The intention is to assist afterschool programs in making a head start for initiating self-assessment for continuous improvement.

Afterschool Program Evaluation
Staff Self-Assessment Survey

Instructions

Eight surveys and corresponding rubrics were created based on the following topics of program structure:

- Program Goals
- Program Code of Conduct
- Program Organization
- Linkages to Day School
- Curriculum Design
- Professional Development
- Evaluation
- Communication

When using these self-assessment surveys, programs are encouraged to choose topics based on the areas of their greatest needs for program improvement. There is no need to complete all eight surveys.

Managerial staff (e.g. program administrators, project directors, site coordinators, etc.) should collect the surveys completed by site-level staff members (e.g., instructors, volunteers, tutors, etc.) and use the rubrics to assess current status of their program.

Program Goals

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Indicators	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
a. The program has clear established goals.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Staff use program goals to plan activities.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Activities are geared toward helping students achieve program goals.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Students are aware of program goals.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Parents are aware of program goals.	1	2	3	4	5

Rubric

(To obtain the total score, multiply the scores in the rubric with the total number of surveys collected)

Scores per survey	
5-10	Program goals are not clearly articulated and inconsistently implemented across afterschool programming. The program should make an effort to clearly define goals for each programming area. In addition, a strategic plan should be undertaken to ensure that program curriculum is aligned with the program goal and that staff have proper training to carry out the curriculum. For example, a program with a goal of improving achievement should include standards-based content in the curriculum. The program could also consider hiring qualified teachers who have familiarity with the content standards.
11-19	The articulation or implementation of program goals may be less than ideal for some programs. The program could review their goals to identify areas where the goals may need to be clarified or communicated more effectively to staff. In addition, the program could also review alignment between program goals, curriculum content and staff capabilities to determine if certain program areas need improvement.
20-25	Program goals are clearly articulated and are being consistently implemented across afterschool programming.

Program Code of Conduct

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Indicators	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
a. Program has established clear participation and attendance expectations for students.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Staff set appropriate limits for students.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Staff encourage students to resolve their own conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Staff consistently apply rewards and consequences.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Staff are knowledgeable about students' respectable culture(s) and language(s).	1	2	3	4	5

Rubric

(To obtain the total score, multiply the scores in the rubric with the total number of surveys collected)

Score per survey	
5-10	Clear rules and expectations for conduct need to be established regarding program attendance and participation. The site should also ensure that staff have adequate access to professional development opportunities geared toward improving general classroom management techniques. Staff should be strongly encouraged to participate in these opportunities to improve their capacity to deal with student issues such as discipline and conflict resolution.
11-19	Program rules and expectations for conduct may not be as clear they could be. The site could review program rules and expectations to identify areas where they may need to be clarified or communicated more effectively to staff. In addition participation in professional development training could be monitored to determine whether levels are adequate.
20-25	There are clear rules and expectations for conduct within the program.

Program Organization

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Indicators	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
a. Students understand the rules for behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
b. The site addresses student behavioral issues in a timely and consistent manner.	1	2	3	4	5
c. The staff has a voice in decisions about curriculum and instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Staff members take an active role in program leadership and decision-making.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Staff members meet with each other on a regular basis to review data on student learning.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Supervisors provide adequate support to their staff	1	2	3	4	5
g. An adequate selection of texts/materials/resources is available for **[CONTENT AREA]** instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
h. The program is structured in a way that encourages me to have positive working relationships with the students.	1	2	3	4	5
i. I have experience in working with diverse student populations.	1	2	3	4	5

Rubric

(To obtain the total score, multiply the scores in the rubric with the total number of surveys collected)

Score per survey	
9-18	The program structure lacks in organization. The site needs to establish clear program rules, regulations, and behavior expectations for students and identify areas where they may need to be communicated more effectively to students and staff. The program should review the resources available to the site/staff, such as time for regular meetings, support for staff, and materials for instruction. Staff should be encouraged to partake in the decision-making process.
19-35	The system of organization is adequate but needs further work on improving program organization and structure for maintaining program efficiency. The program could review program rules, regulations, and behavior expectations for students to identify areas where they may need to be clarified. The program may meet the minimal requirements for resources and instruction, but should identify a means to enrich the program, such as regular and meaningful staff meetings or a review of current instructional materials/resources to ensure staff and student satisfaction. The program could work on improving the sense of autonomy and teamwork among the program for staff members to encourage a sense of ownership in the decision-making process.
36-45	There is a system of organization for the program and for retaining quality staff.

Linkages to Day School

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about linkages to day school.

Indicators	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
a. On a week-to-week basis the staff know what **[CONTENT AREA]** content will be covered during the school day at the students' schools.	1	2	3	4	5
b. The staff know whom to contact at the students' day schools if they have questions about their students' progress or status.	1	2	3	4	5
c. The staff coordinate their afterschool activities/projects with the students' day school work.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Day school and afterschool staff collaborate on developing curriculum and activities.	1	2	3	4	5
e. The staff consider/use assessment data from students' day school to plan their work with students.	1	2	3	4	5

Rubric

(To obtain the total score, multiply the scores in the rubric with the total number of surveys collected)

Score per survey	
5-10	Staff are unaware of the day school curriculum and activities and the students' progress at school. Afterschool staff and day school teachers need to coordinate activities and curriculum development and curriculum implementation. Afterschool activities should be aligned with the students' day school performance. Staff need to be encouraged to interact with day school teachers in order to learn more about student progress, effective instructional techniques, and curricula implementation. Also, staff should learn how to use student assessment information to inform their lesson plans and activities.
11-19	Staff have some contact with day school staff about lesson plans, curriculum development and implementation. Afterschool staff may inquire about student progress, but interactions could be more frequent. Staff should increase their efforts to coordinate with day school teachers in order to understand their student's needs. Also, efforts could be made to learn about effective teaching strategies from student's teachers.
20-25	Staff frequently/regularly communicates with day school teachers and parents.

Curriculum Design

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about curriculum design.

Indicators	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
a. The instructional staff are knowledgeable about national **[CONTENT AREA]** standards.	1	2	3	4	5
b. The instructional staff are knowledgeable about state **[CONTENT AREA]** standards.	1	2	3	4	5
c. The curriculum is based on **[CONTENT AREA]** standards.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Staff regularly adjust/alter afterschool practices based on data about student learning (e.g. test results, student performance/progress, student work).	1	2	3	4	5
e. The curriculum is consistent with program objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
f. The language and culture of the students are taken into account when designing activities.	1	2	3	4	5

Rubric

(To obtain the total score, multiply the scores in the rubric with the total number of surveys collected)

Score per survey	
6-12	The curriculum design of the program needs more direction. The program needs to review their program objectives to ensure clarity and identify areas that need to be communicated effectively to staff. The curriculum needs to be reviewed to ensure that it meets state and national based standards, and that it is being designed for a diverse-set audience. The site should also ensure that staff have adequate access to opportunities (e.g. professional development) geared toward learning about state and national standards. Staff should be strongly encouraged to participate in these opportunities to improve their capacity to instruct students.
13-23	The curriculum minimally meets standards and objectives in its design. The program could have a more strategic approach in achieving program objectives through its curriculum by providing higher level standards in curriculum instruction or accommodating to the culture and language of its students. Staff could be encouraged to participate in professional development opportunities to improve their capacity to instruct students. Staff could also use student data (e.g. test results, student performance/progress, student work) to improve current practices.
24-30	The curriculum is designed to be meaningful, addresses state and national based standards, and accommodates a diverse student population.

Professional Development

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about professional development opportunities offered from your afterschool program.

Indicators	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
a. Staff are offered multiple opportunities for professional developments annually.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Opportunities are relevant to staff training needs.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Professional developments offered are aligned with program goals.	1	2	3	4	5
d. All staff received trainings prior to content specific lesson implementations.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Staff requests for additional training and/or professional development are always addressed.	1	2	3	4	5

Rubric

(To obtain the total score, multiply the scores in the rubric with the total number of surveys collected)

Score per survey	
5-10	Staff do not have adequate training to ensure high quality instruction. The program needs to review its current professional development offerings for adequate frequency and relevancy for its staff. Offerings need to be aligned with program goals to ensure clear program direction/mission. Trainings should be offered multiple times throughout the year, and staff should have adequate resources (i.e., time and financial) to participate in professional development. In addition, the program should identify professional development needs through staff requests.
11-19	Staff are provided adequate training. The program could look to improving their professional development offerings by reassessing the frequency and relevancy for its staff. Improving the offerings may increase staff's ability to develop and implement appropriate curriculum, support their function as role models, and generally attract and retain high quality staff.
20-25	All staff members have adequate training to ensure high quality instruction.

Example of identifying professional development through staff requests:

Please check the top three areas in which you'd like further training:

- ❑ Connecting afterschool learning w/ day-school curriculum
- ❑ Applying state/national standards to afterschool curriculum
- ❑ Evaluating the program/self evaluation
- ❑ Working with English language learners (students who do not speak English as their first language)
- ❑ Content-specific training
- ❑ Assessment
- ❑ Other: _____

Evaluation

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Indicators	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
a. Staff are given opportunities to share feedback about the program.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Staff are given continuous feedback on their performance.	1	2	3	4	5
c. If the afterschool program is evaluated (either formally or informally), the staff are notified of the findings from these evaluations.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Students are given opportunities to share their concerns about the program.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Students' academic progress is frequently evaluated.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Parents are given opportunities to provide feedback about the program.	1	2	3	4	5
g. Evaluation findings are used for program improvement.	1	2	3	4	5

Rubric

(To obtain the total score, multiply the scores in the rubric with the total number of surveys collected)

Score per survey	
7-14	Evaluations (of the program and the staff) are not adequately or effectively used to improve the program. Staff need to be informed of program evaluation findings and given feedback of their own performance. Staff, students and parents need to be given opportunities to provide feedback on the program. The program needs to engage in continuous improvement and make assessment and evaluation an integral part of their functions.
15-27	Evaluations (of the program and the staff) may be minimally used to improve program. The program could review their information sharing system to ensure that staff understand the evaluation findings and the feedback of their own performance. The program could look to providing frequent opportunities for staff, students, and parents to provide feedback on the program.
28-35	The program has a program improvement system in place that utilizes evaluation findings and feedback.

Communication

1. On average, how often during a given semester do you:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Regularly
a. Speak with your students' day school teachers to coordinate curricula?	1	2	3	4	5
b. Speak with your students' day school teachers specifically regarding **[CONTENT AREA]** instruction issues?	1	2	3	4	5
c. Speak with your students' day school teachers regarding student progress and homework?	1	2	3	4	5
d. Discuss student issues (e.g., behavior, progress, special events, etc.) with the parents of your afterschool students?	1	2	3	4	5
e. Speak with your students' parents regarding student progress and homework?	1	2	3	4	5

2. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Indicators	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
a. There are specific staff members who are in charge of coordinating communication between the afterschool program and the students' day school staff.	1	2	3	4	5
b. I have designated times set aside to meet with the parents of my afterschool students.	1	2	3	4	5

Rubric

(To obtain the total score, multiply the scores in the rubric with the total number of surveys collected)

Score per survey	
7-14	The program needs to establish a clear plan for communication with the day school and the parents. More effort needs to be made in fostering communication between the afterschool staff and day school teachers, and afterschool staff and parents. Staff needs to speak with day school teachers to coordinate curricula and discuss instruction issues or student progress and homework. Also, staff needs to increase interaction with parents to discuss student issues or student progress and homework. Thus, staff should be encouraged to speak more frequently with day school teachers in order to acquire knowledge of their students and attain effective teaching strategies to help students learn. Also, staff should be encouraged to schedule parent-teacher meetings and find ways to increase parent participation so parents will feel connected to the program.
15-27	The program may have a plan for communication with the day school and the parents, but it could be reviewed for improvement or clarity. Staff needs to maintain frequent communication with day school teachers and parents. The program could review current efforts in fostering communication and assess areas that need improvement. Staff could be encouraged to share more information about the afterschool program with parents so that parents are aware of events and activities as well as student progress. In addition, staff could schedule frequent meetings with day school teachers and parents, and be given the time to schedule meetings with parents and day school teachers outside of program hours.
28-35	The program has a clear plan for communication with the day school and parents.

Instructional Features
Program Staff Self-Assessment Survey

Instructions

Three surveys and corresponding rubrics were created based on the following topics of program structure in a content-specific program:

- Program Goals
- Program Support
- Program Evaluative Structure

When using these self-assessment surveys, content-specific programs are encouraged to choose topics based on the areas of their greatest needs for program improvement. There is no need to complete all three surveys.

Managerial staff (e.g. program administrators, project directors, site coordinators, etc.) should collect the surveys completed by site-level staff members (e.g. instructors, volunteers, tutors, etc.) and use the rubrics to assess current status of their program.

[CONTENT AREA such as Math, Reading, Science, etc.] Program Goals

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Indicators	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
a. This **[CONTENT AREA]** program has clear established objectives for students to achieve.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Staff use these objectives to plan activities.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Activities are geared toward helping students achieve program objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Students are aware of program objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Parents are aware of program objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Sufficient time is allocated to the **[CONTENT AREA]** program for student practice and activities	1	2	3	4	5

Rubric

(To obtain the total score, multiply the scores in the rubric with the total number of surveys collected)

Score per survey	
6-12	Program goals are inconsistently implemented and not clearly articulated across the **[CONTENT AREA]** programming. The **[CONTENT AREA]** program should make an effort to clearly define goals for its content area. In addition, a strategic plan should be undertaken to ensure that **[CONTENT AREA]** curriculum is aligned with the program goals and that staff have proper training to carry out the curriculum. For example, a program with the goal of improving **[CONTENT AREA]** achievement should include standards-based **[CONTENT AREA]** content in the curriculum. The program should look to hire qualified teachers who have familiarity with the **[CONTENT AREA]** standards.
13-23	The articulation or implementation of **[CONTENT AREA]** program goals may be less than ideal for some programs. The **[CONTENT AREA]** program should review their goals to identify areas where the goals may need to be clarified or communicated more effectively to staff. In addition, the **[CONTENT]** program should also review alignment between its goals, **[CONTENT AREA]** curriculum content and staff capabilities to determine if certain program areas need improvement.
24-30	**[CONTENT AREA]** program goals are clearly articulated and consistently implemented across **[CONTENT AREA]** programming.

For additional content specific training, please go to the SEDL Afterschool Training Toolkit website (http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/).

[CONTENT AREA] Program Support

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Indicators	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
a. The staff has a voice in decisions about curriculum and instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Staff members meet with each other on a regular basis to review data on student learning.	1	2	3	4	5
c. **[CONTENT AREA]** instruction is a scheduled, integral part of the afterschool program.	1	2	3	4	5
d. An adequate selection of texts/materials/resources is available for **[CONTENT AREA]** instruction.	1	2	3	4	5

Rubric

(To obtain the total score, multiply the scores in the rubric with the total number of surveys collected)

Score per survey	
4-8	The **[CONTENT AREA]** program structure lacks in support and resources. The program should review the resources available to the site/staff, such as time for regular meetings, support for staff, and materials for **[CONTENT AREA]** instruction. Staff should be encouraged to partake in the decision-making process.
9-15	The system of support is adequate but needs further work. The **[CONTENT AREA]** program may meet the minimal requirements for **[CONTENT AREA]** resources and instruction, but should identify a means to enrich the program, such as regular and meaningful staff meetings or a review of current **[CONTENT AREA]** instructional materials/resources to ensure staff and student satisfaction. The program should encourage staff to participate in the decision-making process.
16-20	There is a system of support and the staff effectively utilizes the **[CONTENT AREA]** program resources.

For additional content specific training, please go to the SEDL Afterschool Training Toolkit website (http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/).

[CONTENT AREA] Program Evaluative Structure

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Indicators	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
a. Students' academic progress is frequently examined.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Student assessment results are used for program improvement.	1	2	3	4	5
c. I consider/use assessment data from students' day school to plan my work with students.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Student feedback is solicited and used for program improvement	1	2	3	4	5

Rubric

(To obtain the total score, multiply the scores in the rubric with the total number of surveys collected)

Score per survey	
4-8	Student feedback and assessment results are not adequately or effectively used to improve the **[CONTENT AREA]** program. Staff should be given the resources to access student academic progress and assessment results from the day school in order to engage in continuous **[CONTENT AREA]** program improvement. Also, staff should be properly taught to utilize the assessment results/data in **[CONTENT AREA]** instruction. Student feedback on the program is also an integral part of program improvement. A system for obtaining student feedback should be established.
9-15	Student feedback and assessment results are minimally used to improve the **[CONTENT AREA]** program. The **[CONTENT AREA]** program should ensure that staff are properly and effectively utilizing the student assessment results/data in **[CONTENT AREA]** instruction. The **[CONTENT AREA]** program should look to providing frequent opportunities for student feedback.
16-20	The **[CONTENT AREA]** program has a program improvement system in place that utilizes student assessment data/results and feedback.

For additional content specific training, please go to the SEDL Afterschool Training Toolkit website (http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/).

Program Staff Informational Sheet
Instructional Features: Standard and Research-based Practices:
Math

The following list illustrates recommended mathematical practices that should be used regularly as part of your afterschool program. Your program does not need to cover all of the recommendations. Rather, this list serves as a tool to help you better understand the focus of your program goals and align activities and instructional strategies accordingly.

- Let students know your expectations and grading criteria for the afterschool math assignments.
- Provide direct feedback to individual students about their progress.
- Provide individualized instruction, such as one-on-one tutoring, peer support, or computer-assisted instruction.
- Provide additional support for students who do not speak English as their first language.
- Provide specific instruction on how to solve math problems.
- Use mathematical tools, such as manipulatives, calculators, and computer-based tools.
- Provide unstructured opportunities for students to investigate and explore their ideas about math on their own.
- Have students actively participate in hypothesis testing.
- Have students provide written justification for their work.
- Ask students to solve “real world” problems.
- Connect math instruction to day school curriculum.
- Blend math practices with practices in other content areas, such as social studies, reading, or art.
- Use learning centers and center-based practices.
- Use project-based learning practices (e.g., having students work on projects spanning several days).
- Use service learning practices (e.g., linking instruction to community service).
- Community partnerships with math-related organizations help support the afterschool program.

Recommended Math Concepts for Grades K–2

The following list shows standards-based mathematical instructions that should be used for students in Grades K–2 in your afterschool program. Your program does not need to cover all of the recommended concepts. Rather, the list serves as a tool to help you better align activities and instructional strategies with age- and grade-appropriate mathematical skills.

- Concepts of numbers (e.g., whole numbers, ordinal and cardinal numbers, fractions).
- Addition and subtraction of whole numbers.
- Basic conventional math symbols (e.g., plus and minus sign, equals sign).
- Basic concepts of change (e.g., understanding that amount of change can be quantified).
- Basic measurement concepts (e.g., length, volume, weight, area, time).
- Basic spatial relationships (e.g., drawing and describing objects).
- Pattern recognition (e.g., through sorting/classification of objects or sounds).

Recommended Math Concepts for Grades 3–5/6

The following list shows standards-based mathematical instructions that should be used for students in Grades 3–5/6 in your afterschool program. Your program does not need to cover all of the recommended concepts. Rather, the list serves as a tool to help you better align activities and instructional strategies with age- and grade-appropriate mathematical skills.

- Understanding/application of fractions, decimals, percentages.
- Multiplication and division.
- Using equations to express relationships between numbers.
- Using graphs, tables, or other graphic representations.
- Understanding of patterns (using numbers or shapes).
- Working with 2- and 3-dimensional shapes.
- Basic measurement (length, area, weight, volume).
- Designing studies and collecting data.

Recommended Math Concepts for Grades 6–8/9

The following list shows standards-based mathematical instructions that should be used for students in Grades 6–8/9 in your afterschool program. Your program does not need to

cover all of the recommended concepts. Rather, the list serves as a tool to help you better align activities and instructional strategies with age- and grade-appropriate mathematical skills.

- Using fractions, decimals, and percentages.
- Using ratios and proportions.
- Understanding/applying mean, range, and median.
- Using tables or graphs to represent/analyze problems.
- Representing data in charts, such as histograms, scatter plots, or box plots.
- Understanding/applying basic geometric concepts such as angles, side length, perimeter, area.
- Formulas for areas of more complex shapes (e.g., triangles, parallelograms, trapezoids, circles, pyramids, cylinders).
- Problem solving using equations.
- Designing small research studies.

Program Staff Informational Sheet
Instructional Features: Standard and Research-based Practices
Reading

The following list illustrates recommended reading practices that should be used regularly as part of your afterschool program. Your program does not need to cover all of the recommendations. Rather, this list serves as a tool to help you better understand the focus of your program goals and align activities and instructional strategies accordingly.

- Let your students know your expectations and criteria for their afterschool assignments.
- Provide direct feedback to individual students about their progress.
- Provide individualized instruction (e.g., one-on-one tutoring, peer support, computer-assisted instruction).
- Provide opportunities for independent reading (e.g., computer or tape assisted).
- Provide opportunities for read-alouds.
- Include nonfiction text in instruction.
- Provide opportunities for students to link personal experiences with stories.
- Connect reading instruction to day school curriculum.
- Blend reading practices with practices in other content areas (such as social studies, math, art, etc).
- Add to a "bank" of vocabulary words.
- Use reading centers.
- Use writing centers.
- Use fluency-building centers.
- Provide additional support for students who do not speak English as their first language.
- Use project-based learning practices (having students work on projects spanning several days).
- Use service learning practices (linking instruction to community service).
- Community partnerships with reading-related organizations helping support the afterschool program.

Reading Staff Self-Assessment (Grades K–2)

The following list shows standards-based reading instructions that should be used for students in grades K–2 in your afterschool program. Your program does not need to cover all

of the recommended contents. Rather, the list serves as a tool to help you better align activities and instructional strategies with age- and grade-appropriate reading skills.

- Print representation of spoken language (i.e., understanding that print represents spoken words).
- Demonstrating awareness of sound-symbol relationships.
- Understanding alphabetic principles (that each letter represents a sound).
- Recognizing common text features such as headings, key words, illustrations, maps, charts.
- Applying decoding to comprehend text (e.g., breaking apart words to understand meaning).
- Vocabulary development.
- Reading silently or aloud with fluency (smoothly and easily).
- Self-monitoring/self-correcting reading.
- Identifying literary devices (e.g., simile, metaphor).
- Understanding antonyms/synonyms.

Reading Staff Self-Assessment (Grades 3–5/6)

The following list shows standards-based reading instructions that should be used for students in Grades 3–5/6 in your afterschool program. Your program does not need to cover all of the recommended contents. Rather, the list serves as a tool to help you better align activities and instructional strategies with age- and grade-appropriate reading skills.

- Developing pre-reading strategies.
- Applying phonetic strategies (i.e., breaking words into sounds) to make meaning from text.
- Applying decoding to comprehend text (e.g., breaking apart words to understand meaning).
- Understanding prefixes, suffixes, and affixes.
- Identifying homophones and homographs.
- Understanding textual features (e.g., tables, graphs, lists).
- Using pictures and context cues to understand meanings of words.
- Using glossaries, table of contents, chapter headings, and indexes to locate information.
- Understanding story components (such as setting, characters, plot).
- Self-monitoring for comprehension.

- Making inferences using evidence.
- Reading a variety of literary genres (e.g., short stories, fiction, nonfiction, mythology).
- Researching topics using a variety of materials.

Reading Staff Self-Assessment (Grades 6–8/9 Middle School)

The following list shows standards-based reading instructions that should be used for students in Grades 6–8/9 in your afterschool program. Your program does not need to cover all of the recommended contents. Rather, the list serves as a tool to help you better align activities and instructional strategies with age- and grade-appropriate reading skills.

- Using text features such as lists, indices, headings.
- Identifying/using text organizational structures (e.g., arrangement, order) to gain meaning from text.
- Applying self-correcting strategies to decode text.
- Self-monitoring for reading.
- Vocabulary development
- Analyzing the purpose of different literary texts.
- Understanding literary techniques (such as foreshadowing).
- Identifying figurative and literary devices (e.g., metaphor, simile).
- Developing and investigating research questions.
- Making predictions/drawing conclusions.
- Producing book reports or other written projects.

Program Staff Informational Sheet

Instructional Features-Standard and Research-based Practices
Science

The following list illustrates recommended science practices that should be used regularly as part of your afterschool program. Your program does not need to cover all of the recommendations. Rather, this list serves as a tool to help you better understand the focus of your program goals and align activities and instructional strategies accordingly.

- Let your students know your expectations and criteria for their afterschool assignments.
- Provide direct feedback to individual students about progress.
- Provide individualized instruction (e.g., one-on-one tutoring, peer support, computer-assisted instruction).
- Provide different types of science instruction to students based on their ability level.
- Provide additional support for students who do not speak English as their first language (English learners).
- Have students work in smaller groups or teams.
- Provide opportunities for students to conduct simple experiments.
- Provide opportunities for students to describe scientific procedures.
- Provide opportunities for students to use tools to gather/analyze/interpret data.
- Provide opportunities for students to use computer simulations of science experiments.
- Provide opportunities for students to design a scientific investigation.
- Provide opportunities for students to develop predictions/explanations/models using evidence.
- Use or project-based learning practices (having students work on projects spanning several days).
- Use of learning centers/center-based practices.
- Connection of science instruction to day school curriculum.
- Blend science practices with practices in other content areas (such as social studies, math, and art).
- Community partnerships with science-related organizations helping support the afterschool program.

The following list shows standards-based science concepts that should be addressed to the students in your afterschool program. Your program does not need to cover all of the

recommended concepts. Rather, the list serves as a tool to help you better align activities and instructional strategies with age- and grade-appropriate science skills.

- Understanding of science/technology.
- Understanding of concepts of scientific inquiry.
- Properties, position, and motion of objects and materials.
- Properties/changes of properties in matter.
- Position and motion of objects.
- Motions and forces.
- Transfer of energy.
- Light, heat, electricity, and magnetism.
- Populations and ecosystems.
- Populations, resources, and environments.
- Characteristics/changes in populations and environments.
- Characteristics and lifecycles of organisms and environments.
- Diversity and adaptations of organisms.
- Structure/function of living systems.
- Reproduction and heredity.
- Regulation and behavior.
- Personal health and nutrition.
- Structure of the earth’s system/the earth in the solar system.
- Objects and changes in earth and sky.
- Natural hazards, risks, and benefits.
- History of nature and science.

Program Staff Informational Sheet

Instructional Features-Standard and Research-based Practices
Arts

The following list illustrates recommended art instructional practices that should be used regularly as part of your afterschool program. Your program does not need to cover all of the recommendations. Rather, this list serves as a tool to help you better understand the focus of your program goals and align activities and instructional strategies accordingly.

- An arts process of creating, performing, and reflecting (e.g., doing, demonstrating learning, group or personal critique).
- Hands-on activities, performances, or productions.
- Public performances and presentations as demonstrations of learning (e.g., in-house group or community).
- Opportunities for reflection/inquiry surrounding art activities (e.g., reading/writing about the arts).
- Time for sequential, sustained skill building experiences (e.g., time for students to think, practice, explore, make mistakes, and evolve in their understanding).
- Hands-on work with real world connections (e.g., playing an instrument, creating a sculpture, working through a script while incorporating topics that are part of the real world environment).
- Cooperative/collaborative art activities.
- External collaborations to broaden and deepen experience (e.g., with peers, artists, art organizations, community partners).
- Regular visits/participation by professional artists in afterschool program.
- Connection of arts instruction to day school curriculum.
- Field trips to local art museums/concerts/performances.
- Community partnerships with art-related organizations (beyond field trips/performances).

The following list shows examples of art activities that can be implemented to the students in your afterschool program. Your program does not need to cover all of the recommended activities. Rather, the list serves as a tool to help you better align activities and instructional strategies with age- and grade-appropriate art skills.

- Creating art experiences that express the self or environment (i.e., activities that directly address concerns of students, their culture, and their community).
- Making connections to history and culture through the arts (i.e., activities that focus on understanding the social, historical, or cultural importance of a work of art).

- Applying art techniques and processes in creating and communicating meaning (i.e., activities that build skills, enhance performance, and provide reflection or critique of student-developed work).
- Engaging students in analyzing and communicating about works of art (i.e., activities that require talking or writing about a work of art in a way that reflects constructs specific to the medium).
- Integrating the arts with other subjects, either as an instructional strategy or a project-based activity (e.g., designing a "travel brochure" for a visit to a favorite planet, which integrates art, science, and technology).
- Using technology as a creative tool (e.g., using computers for animation, graphic design, web portfolios).
- Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
- Singing in groups or individually.
- Playing a musical instrument, in groups or individually.
- Learning skills in theater arts performance (e.g., script writing, acting, improvisation).

Program Staff Informational Sheet

Instructional Features-Standard and Research-based Practices
Technology

The following list illustrates recommended practices in technology that should be used regularly as part of your afterschool program. Your program does not need to cover all of the recommendations. Rather, this list serves as a tool to help you better understand the focus of your program goals and align activities and instructional strategies accordingly.

- Access to technology tools and instruction available to students with different levels of knowledge, ability and understanding.
- Students use multiple technologies as a way to promote inquiry and higher level thinking to increase their knowledge and understanding.
- Students use technology tools to locate, acquire, and evaluate information.
- Students use technology tools to solve problems, create projects, and communicate with others.
- Students use technology tools for personal, cultural, or real-world issues or experiences.
- Students work in cooperative/collaborative teams or groups while using technology for their projects or products.
- Technology projects and activities connected to day school curriculum.
- Technology embedded into and across all content areas (e.g., math, science, literacy, arts).
- Community partnerships with technology-related organizations helping support the afterschool program.

Technology Staff Self-Assessment (Grades K-2)

The following list shows standards-based technology instructions that should be used for students in grades K-2 in your afterschool program. Your program does not need to cover all of the recommended contents. Rather, the list serves as a tool to help you better align activities and instructional strategies with age- and grade-appropriate technology skills.

- Using a variety of technologies such as computers, printers, scanners, digital cameras, and other technology tools appropriate to students' skills, age, and grade level.
- Using age- and grade-appropriate resources such as interactive books, puzzles, logical thinking programs, and multimedia encyclopedias to support learning.
- Using a variety of technology resources such as writing and drawing tools, digital graphics, and other electronic materials for creation and illustrations of thoughts, ideas, and stories.

- Using electronic resources such as CD-ROM and DVD to gather information for a variety of projects.
- Using technology while working cooperatively or collaboratively with peers, family members, and others on authentic or real-world problems.
- Using electronic tools such as e-mail or the internet to communicate with peers, family members, or others regarding authentic or real-world problems or projects.
- Practicing appropriate and responsible use of computer tools and resources by following classroom guidelines.

Technology Staff Self-Assessment (Grades 3–5/6)

The following list shows standards-based technology instructions that should be used for students in Grades 3–5/6 in your afterschool program. Your program does not need to cover all of the recommended contents. Rather, the list serves as a tool to help you better align activities and instructional strategies with age- and grade-appropriate technology skills.

- Using a variety of technologies such as computers, printers, scanners, digital cameras, and other technology tools appropriate to students' skills, age, and grade level.
- Using age- and grade-appropriate resources such as interactive books, puzzles, logical thinking programs, and multimedia encyclopedias to support learning.
- Using a variety of technology resources such as writing and drawing tools, digital graphics, and other electronic materials for creation and illustration of thoughts, ideas, and stories.
- Using electronic resources such as CD-ROM and DVD to gather information for a variety of projects.
- Using technology tools such as scientific probes, data collection, and analysis applications to gather, assess, or analyze information for a variety of projects.
- Allowing students to make their own choice of technology tools (from a variety of options), in order to carry out individual or collaborative projects or products related to academic content.
- Using technology tools for self-directed, individual project-based activities related to academic content.
- Using technology tools for collaborative, project-based activities related to academic content.
- Using telecommunication tools such as e-mail or the internet to communicate with peers, family members, or others regarding authentic or real-world issues or projects.
- Practicing appropriate and responsible use of computer tools and resources by following classroom guidelines.

Technology Staff Self-Assessment (Grades 6–8/9 Middle School)

The following list shows standards-based technology instructions that should be used for students in Grades 6–8/9 in your afterschool program. Your program does not need to cover all of the recommended contents. Rather, the list serves as a tool to help you better align activities and instructional strategies with age- and grade-appropriate technology skills.

- Demonstrating an understanding of the nature and operation of technology systems.
- Applying strategies for identifying and solving common hardware and software problems.
- Using technology while working independently on projects or products related to academic curriculum.
- Using technology to collaborate with peers and others on projects related to the academic curriculum.
- Using telecommunications such as e-mail and the Web to collaborate, publish, and interact with peers, experts, and other audiences.
- Evaluating and selecting technological tools based on the appropriateness for specific tasks.
- Using appropriate technology resources and tools to investigate and solve problems and make informed decisions regarding real-world concerns (e.g., using technology tools such as scientific probes, data collection, and analysis applications to gather, assess, and analyze information for a variety of projects).
- Using appropriate technologies to locate, evaluate, and collect information from a variety of sources.
- Using technology tools to process data and report results.
- Researching and evaluating the accuracy, relevance, appropriateness, comprehensiveness, and bias of electronic information.
- Using technology as a tool for creative projects related to writing, publishing, music, performance and visual arts, and any other illustration of thoughts and ideas.
- Practicing responsible behavior and use of technology (e.g., using information, media, and technology in a responsible manner which includes following the school's acceptable use policy, adhering to copyright laws, respecting the rights of others, and employing proper etiquette in all forms of communication).
- Discussing consequences of misuse of technology systems, information, hardware, and software.

Program Staff Informational Sheet
Instructional Features: Standard and Research-based Practices
Homework

The following list illustrates recommended homework practices that should be used regularly as part of your afterschool program. Your program does not need to cover all of the recommendations. Rather, this list serves as a tool to help you better understand the focus of your program goals and align activities and instructional strategies accordingly.

- Let your students know your expectations and criteria for their afterschool assignments.
- Monitor individual student progress.
- Provide direct feedback to individual students about progress.
- Incorporation of parents' input on students' homework responsibilities and progress.
- Coordination of students' homework plans with their day school teachers and parents.
- Regular feedback to parents regarding their children's homework and progress.
- Provide different types of instruction to students based on their ability level.
- Individualized instruction (e.g., one-on-one tutoring, peer support, computer-assisted instruction).
- Tutoring component as part of the homework assistance program (i.e., tutors trained in & providing specialized help in specific content areas).
- Provide additional support for students who do not speak English as their first language (English learners).
- Have students work in smaller groups or teams.
- Instruction on time management or organizational skills.
- Instruction on test preparation techniques.
- Instruction on note-taking techniques.
- Instruction on using reference materials for research.
- Community involvement in the homework assistance program (e.g., partnerships w/ local agencies, universities, volunteer programs).

The following list illustrates recommended homework strategies to use to monitor individual student progress. These strategies should be used regularly as part of your afterschool program, but your program does not need to cover all of the recommendations. Rather, this list serves as a tool to help you better understand the focus of your program goals and align activities and instructional strategies accordingly.

- Homework planners/logs
- Using checklists and rubrics to monitor homework quality and completion
- Homework hotlines
- Keeping track of student test scores and progress in the day school
- Parent-teacher-student learning contracts
- Graphic organizers
- Concept maps

Parent Satisfaction and Perceived Student Outcomes
Parent Survey

Instructions

For the items below, please circle the number that best reflects your response to each statement.

1. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
a. I feel welcomed to visit my child(ren)'s afterschool program any time I want.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Someone is available to talk to me at the afterschool program when I have any questions or concerns.	1	2	3	4	5
c. I feel comfortable about asking the people who work at the afterschool program what my child(ren) is learning there.	1	2	3	4	5
d. The afterschool program staff help me understand the report cards and paper work I get from my child(ren)'s school.	1	2	3	4	5
e. The afterschool program staff will let me know immediately if my child(ren) is not paying attention to his/her schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5
f. The afterschool program staff deals with my child(ren)'s behavior problems quickly and fairly.	1	2	3	4	5

2. How satisfied are you with the following parts of your child(ren)'s afterschool program?

	Very Unsatisfied				Very Satisfied
a. The kinds of activities offered.	1	2	3	4	5
b. The overall performance of the afterschool staff.	1	2	3	4	5
c. What my child(ren) learns in the afterschool program.	1	2	3	4	5
d. The materials and resources that the program provides for parents (workshops, newsletters, parents' nights).	1	2	3	4	5

3. Since your child(ren) started attending the **[CONTENT AREA]** activities in the afterschool program, have you noticed a change in his/her:

	Not sure	Decreased	No change	Improved a little	Improved somewhat	Improved a lot
a. **[CONTENT AREA]** skills.	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Interest in **[CONTENT AREA]**.	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. Interest in his/her schoolwork in general.	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. Finishing of **[CONTENT AREA]** homework on time.	0	1	2	3	4	5

Rubric

(To obtain the total score, multiply the scores in the rubric with the total number of surveys collected)

Score per survey	
14-28	Parents are generally unsatisfied and have low perceptions of the afterschool program. In addition, parents perceived the program to have no or negative impact on their child(ren). Parent feedback on the program is an integral part of continuous program improvement. A system for obtaining parent feedback ought to be established. The feedback should be used to examine and identify areas for program improvement.
29-55	Parents are minimally satisfied and have average perceptions of the afterschool program. In addition, parents perceived the program to have little positive impact on their child(ren). The program should solicit additional feedback from parents and provide frequent opportunities for feedback. The feedback should be used to examine and identify areas for program improvement.
56-70	Parents are generally satisfied and have high perceptions of the afterschool program. In addition, parents perceived the program to have positive impact on their child(ren).

Teacher Awareness of Afterschool Activities & Perceived Student Outcomes
Teacher Survey

Instructions

For the items below, please circle the number that best reflects your response to each statement.

1. Are you aware of which of your students participate in this afterschool program?

Yes	No
1	2

If yes, continue with question #2. If no, please skip to question #4.

2. Please estimate how the behavior of your students who attend the afterschool program changed in the following areas since participating in the program:

	Don't know/ not sure	Decreased greatly	Decreased	Stayed the same	Increased	Increased greatly
a. School attendance.	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Frequency of classroom participation.	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. Effort on schoolwork.	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. Paying attention in class.	0	1	2	3	4	5
e. Fewer discipline problems.	0	1	2	3	4	5

3. Please estimate how the behavior of your students who attend the afterschool program changed in the following areas since participating in the program:

	Don't know/ not sure	Decreased greatly	Decreased	Stayed the same	Increased	Increased greatly
a. Quality of their **[CONTENT AREA]** homework.	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Turning in their **[CONTENT AREA]** homework on time.	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. Their **[CONTENT AREA]** skills.	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. Their grades on **[CONTENT AREA]** tests.	0	1	2	3	4	5
e. Their attitude toward **[CONTENT AREA]**.	0	1	2	3	4	5
f. Cooperative and collaborative skills.	0	1	2	3	4	5
g. Persistence in school work.	0	1	2	3	4	5
h. Problem solving skills.	0	1	2	3	4	5

4. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
a. I am knowledgeable about the **[CONTENT AREA]** curriculum of the afterschool program.	1	2	3	4	5
b. I am knowledgeable about the non-academic activities offered through the afterschool program.	1	2	3	4	5
c. I know whom to contact at the afterschool program if I have a question.	1	2	3	4	5

5. Please estimate how often:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Regularly
a. The staff of the afterschool program make an effort to communicate with you about your students' progress.	1	2	3	4	5
b. The staff of the afterschool program have contacted you to help coordinate curriculum between the program and the school.	1	2	3	4	5
c. You review the instructional materials used in the afterschool program.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Your school staff meet with the after- school program staff to align curricula.	1	2	3	4	5

Rubric – Question 2

(To obtain the total score, multiply the scores in the rubric with the total number of surveys collected)

Score per survey	
13-38	Day school teachers generally perceive the program to have no or negative impact on their students' behavior. A system for obtaining day school feedback needs to be established. Day school teacher feedback on the program is an integral part of program improvement. The feedback should be used to examine and identify areas for program improvement. Strategic collaboration with day school teachers would address the areas that need improvement.
39-51	Day school teachers generally perceive the program to have little positive impact on their students' behavior. Day school teacher feedback on the program is an integral part of program improvement. The program should solicit additional feedback from day school teachers and provide frequent opportunities for feedback. The feedback should be used to examine and identify areas for program improvement. Strategic collaboration with day school teachers would address the areas that need improvement.
52-65	Day school teachers generally perceive the program to have positive impact on their students' behavior.

Rubric – Question s 3 & 4

(To obtain the total score, multiply the scores in the rubric with the total number of surveys collected)

Score per survey	
7-14	The program needs to establish a clear plan for communication and collaboration with the day school. More effort needs to be made in fostering communication and collaboration between the afterschool staff and day school teachers. Staff needs to speak with day school teachers to coordinate curricula and discuss instruction issues or student progress and homework. Also, staff needs to increase interaction with day school teachers to discuss student issues or student progress and homework. Staff should be encouraged to schedule meetings with day school teachers.
15-27	The program may have a plan for communication and collaboration with the day school, but it should be reviewed for improvement or clarity. Staff needs to maintain frequent communication with day school teachers. The program should review current efforts in fostering communication and collaboration, and assess areas that need improvement. Staff should be encouraged to share more information about the afterschool program with day school teachers so that they are aware of events and activities as well as student progress. In addition, staff should schedule frequent meetings with day school teachers, and be given the time to schedule meetings with day school teachers outside of program hours.
28-35	The program has a clear plan for communication and collaboration with the day school teachers.