Afterschool Matters

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Welcome

I was fortunate this past summer to visit the Summer Learning Program at the Boston Nature Center, a property of the Massachusetts Audubon Society. I found 35 students about to launch their self-designed kites. I was struck by how little string the youth afforded their kites. While they had plenty of room in a clearing and a reasonable wind, for 20 minutes I saw only a lot of running, limited string, and low flying. When a teacher's kite started to edge higher, all eyes focused. The teacher challenged the youth to let go a little. She circulated to help the students while keeping her own kite high in the sky. Forty-five minutes later, the sky was full to the tree tops with colorful flyers.

While watching, I recalled Nevitt Sanford's (1967) student development theory of challenge and support. We need both challenge and support in order to fully develop and progress. Having a kite, a string, and a goal was not enough for the youth I observed. They moved out of their tentative caution when a teacher offered modeling, challenge, and support in the context of an engaging activity. The fact that the teacher was excited and enthusiastic over her own kite was not insignificant.

This issue of *Afterschool Matters* includes a special look at the experiences of English language learners (ELLs) and immigrant youth in out-of-school time (OST) programs. Over the last few years, OST programs have increasingly been expanding their role in supporting school learning. Many ELL and immigrant children have used OST program experiences to safely "try out" language skills, get tutoring in school subjects, strengthen relationships with peers, and build their ability to manage multiple cultural contexts and value systems.

In this issue, Julie Maxwell-Jolly argues that, though time is a major barrier to progress for language learners, some emerging research on OST programs serving ELLs shows promising results. Jhumpa Bhattacharya and Jimena Quiroga remind us that we still fall short in intentionally designing our programs to support ELL and immigrant youth and need to provide resources and professional development opportunities to support the work. Our own study at NIOST (p. 52) notes that more exploratory research is needed to identify the OST program practices and characteristics that best support immigrant youth and families.

ELL and immigrant youth participating in our OST programs are surrounded by challenges inherent in their situation between cultures and languages. They are waiting for support to let their strings go. We hope that all the articles in this issue will help to clarify important directions in which to invest time and funding in the OST field. We all intend for all youth to soar.

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english learners and out-of-school time programs

The Potential of OST Programs to Foster EL Success

by Julie Maxwell-Jolly

No matter where we live in the U.S., immigrants and English learners (ELs) are our students. Between 1979 and 2008, the number of children ages 5–17 who spoke a language other than English at home increased from 3.8 to 10.9 million, or from 9 to 21 percent of the population in this age range (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). Moreover, between school years 1997–98 and 2007–08, the number of these children who were not yet proficient in English increased by more than 50 percent to almost 5.5 million, or about 10 percent of U.S. public school students. The Southwest and Florida have the largest EL populations, but the Southeastern states are experiencing the most rapid growth in EL student numbers (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2010).

That the EL student population is growing is not a problem, but that ELs are not generally thriving in U.S. classrooms is. ELs score lower on tests, get poorer grades, take fewer advanced or college prep classes at the sec-

ondary level, and graduate from high school at much lower rates than do native speakers of English. Moreover, the likelihood that EL students will receive any post-secondary education or find and maintain stable employment is lower than for other students (Callahan, 2010; Ruiz de Velasco, Fix, & Clewell, 2000; Valverde, 1987).

One reason for this lower level of achievement is *time*. ELs have to learn a new language, learn content through this new language, and learn about the culture of the school as well as the culture at large—all in the same amount of time English-fluent students have in which to learn only content. Out-of-school time (OST)

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programs have the potential to offer educational benefits to this growing EL population by devoting their valuable resource of *time* to research-based activities that can support ELs facing the dual challenge of learning both English and subject matter content.

The Importance of Time

Time is one the most fundamental resources in any classroom—the time for teachers to teach and for students to learn (Brown & Saks, 1986, 1987; Tate, 2001). A long-established body of literature on instructional strategy finds that academic gain is related to the amount of time students spend engaged in academic tasks (D'Agostino, 2000; Gamoran, Porter, Smithson, & White, 1997; Gándara,1999; Kyriakides, Campbell, & Gagatsis, 2000; Luyten & de Jong, 1998). The difference comes not merely from "time on task," but rather from "engaged" time (Nerenz & Knop, 1983).

So Much to Learn, So Little Time

To be successful in school, all learners need instruction that builds academic literacy skills as well as subject matter knowledge. ELs have the double burden of learning content as they simultaneously learn English (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). As Gibbons (2003) wrote, "For students who are learning English as a second language in English-medium schools, English is both a target and a medium of education: they are not only learning English as a subject but are learning through it as well" (p. 247).

One reason many EL students do so poorly in U.S. schools is that we do not provide sufficient time for them to learn both the language and the content of the curriculum. The goal is not just to gain conversational competence in English. Mastery of academic language, the language of schooling, is crucial for school success (Bailey & Butler, 2003; Saunders & Goldenberg, 2010). To become proficient in academic language, students must learn a wide range of oral and written grammatical styles and genres (Schlepegrell, 2001, 2004). Students who speak a language other than English at home are unlikely to have exposure to these grammatical styles in English. Developing this level of language proficiency takes considerable time. Scholars tell us that students need only two or three years to develop conversational competence in a second language, but that they need five to eight

years or more to develop academic competence (Baker, 2001). Research shows also that ELs are at risk of failing in school because of the amount of time it takes to develop the advanced literacy skills they need in order to master academic content (Collier, 1987, 1992; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000).

Though ELs need extra time for extra learning, some argue that they actually spend less time in instruction than do their English-only peers (Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003). The practice of "pull-out" instruction for ELs can lead to gaps in their instruction, as well as time lost in the physical transition from room to room (Anstrom & Educational Resources Information Center, 1997; Fleischman & Hopstock, 1993; Gándara et al., 2003). ELs also lose time when they have to wait for instruction to be translated or spend a significant portion of the day not understanding whole-class instruction. In addition, time is lost at the beginning of the school year while schools assess students' English proficiency before assigning them to an instructional program (Gándara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2000). High school ELs have been shown to be less likely to receive a full academic day of rigorous content area instruction than their English-fluent peers (Minicucci & Olsen, 1992; Olsen, 1997; Olsen & Jaramillo, 2000).

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The Quality of Instructional Time

In addition to simple instructional *time*, EL success is related to the *quality* of instruction. Hamann and Reeves (2008) argue that EL students' access to effective education involves both the time for instruction and how well that time is used. They note that:

> …effective instruction includes much more than students' time on task.… [I]t is important to ask how often students have access to high quality instruction.… It is straightforward to anticipate a learning and achievement gap between those with more access and those with less. (p. 9)

They argue that many culturally and linguistically diverse students are in low-track classes (Oakes, 1985), where they are less likely to experience the high-quality programs that foster achievement.

Another factor is teacher skill. According to Cohen and his co-authors (2003), teachers who have more

preparation can make the best use of all classroom resources, including time. However, research shows that urban schools—the very schools ELs are most likely to attend across the U.S. (Consentino de Cohen, Deterding, & Clewell, 2005)—have less qualified teachers and that low-income, low-achieving students of color, particularly those in urban schools, are much more likely than others to find themselves in classes with the least skilled teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996; Hanushek, 1992; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002). Research in California also finds a dearth of teachers with expertise in specific EL instructional skills (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2004).

The Potential of Out-of-School Time for English Learners

OST programs have the potential to provide additional support for ELs. In the simplest terms, OST programs expand the school day, providing EL students with more time in which to address their dual learning challenge. Research shows that this additional time can make a difference if used effectively.

In California, which has the largest number of afterschool programs and spends more by far on these programs than any other state, OST programs are likely to be present in schools with large percentages of EL students. The EL population of California schools with publicly funded afterschool programs is 38 percent, as compared to the state average of 24 percent. This difference holds true not only for the overall school population but also at each level: elementary, middle, and high school (California Afterschool Network, 2011; California Department of Education, 2011).

Research specifically on the impact of OST programs on EL achievement is just emerging. However, the available studies show promising results. For example, an evaluation of Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Literacy (CORAL) OST programs in five California cities that served 5,300 students, half of whom were ELs, found that ELs made literacy gains similar to those of their non-EL peers after the CORAL program increased its focus on literacy strategies including primary language reading and one-on-one primary language support (Arbreton, Sheldon, Bradshaw, & Goldsmith, 2008). Evaluators of The After School Corporation (TASC) program in New York found that EL students

who participated actively in TASC programs showed greater gains in math achievement than did non-participant ELs (Welsh, Russell, Williams, Reisner, & White, 2002). A rigorous evaluation of LA's BEST afterschool programs found that participants with more regular attendance and greater contact with adults showed a substantial decrease in their crime rate and a moderate increase in academic achievement as compared to non-participant controls (Goldschmidt & Huang, 2007). This evaluation did not focus specifically on ELs, but, since 50 percent of LA's BEST participants are ELs, the findings should be indicative of results for these students. Finally, Vandell and her colleagues (2007) reported on afterschool outcomes in eight states, finding that continuous participation in high-quality afterschool programs resulted in academic and other benefits for low-income youth, many of whom were recent immigrants.

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Research-Supported Strategies: OST Programs and English Learners

Since direct research evidence about OST impact on ELs is scarce, we can find guidance on ways in which OST programs can benefit ELs by identifying factors that contribute to effective EL education in school and then applying them to OST education. Research-supported approaches through which OST programs might use their "extra" time to support EL students include:

- Primary language instruction and support
- Opportunity for practice, interaction, and "air time"
- Understanding of individual differences
- Motivation and engagement
- Connection to home and family

Not all of these factors are unique to ELs, but they are particularly important for these students because of their dual learning challenge.

Primary Language Instruction and Support

A growing body of research indicates that using students' primary language in instruction is a particularly effective way to make school comprehensible for EL students; the practice helps students develop their language skills in English even as they cover age- and grade-appropriate academic content (Genessee, Paradis, & Crago, 2004). Meta-analyses of studies in the U.S.

and abroad have shown that students in education programs that include their primary language can succeed academically and can, in fact, do better on English-language achievement tests than do EL students in English-only programs (Krashen & McField, 2005). Abilities that support the development of academic language—those needed to do well in content areas in English—transfer between languages (Cummins & Danesi, 1990; Dressler & Kamil, 2006). Meta-analytic syntheses provide overwhelming evidence that teaching ELs to read in their primary language promotes higher levels of reading in English (August & Shanahan, 2006; Colombi & Schleppegrell, 2002; Genesee, Geva, Dressler, & Kamil, 2006). Another body of research indicates that bilingualism and biliteracy provide cognitive and social advantages (Bialystock & Hakuta, 1994; Cummins, 1978, 1979, 1989; Hakuta, 1986). An associated hypothesis maintains that when children obtain a certain competence level—a "threshold"—in their second language, they attain such cognitive benefits of bilingualism as increased IQ (Baker, 2001).

In the content areas, strong evidence shows that instructing ELs in their strongest language, or using both their first and second languages, gives them better access to content area learning and enables more valid assessment of what they know and can do (Abedi, 2004; Escamilla, Chavez, & Vigil, 2005; Figueroa, 2004; Lazaruk, 2007; Mahon, 2006). The *rigor* of the content is as important to EL success as the level of English proficiency (Callahan, 2010). Use of students' primary language in instruction ensures that they can access age- and grade-appropriate academic content while continuing to gain English proficiency.

Despite the preponderance of this research, use of students' primary language in school is the exception rather than the rule. In California, for example, where approximately a third of the nation's ELs attend school, only about 5 percent are in programs that include primary language instruction; about 20 percent receive some primary language support (California Department of Education, 2011). Primary language instruction is rare across the U.S. principally because policies in many states constrain its use. For example, in California, since the 1998 passage of Proposition 227, which limits primary language instruction, the number of teachers earning bilingual certification decreased by almost 40 percent during a period that saw an 8.5 percent increase in the EL population (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010).

Because OST programs are not subject to the same strictures as school instruction and because they often employ staff from the same cultural and linguistic background as the students, they can use primary language strategies to support ELs. For example, when OST educators and classroom teachers communicate about classroom content, OST instructors can use students' primary language to reinforce the content taught in English that day; they can also preview content to be addressed the next day—a strategy that has been shown to be effective for both language and content instruction (Hamann & Reeves, 2008). OST educators can use ELs' primary language to check how well students are grasping classroom concepts; they can then report to classroom teachers about areas in which students are struggling and use students' primary language while working with them on challenging subjects.

Opportunity for Practice, Interaction, and "Air Time"

In order to become proficient, ELs need opportunities to practice their English language skills. Though significant attention has been devoted to the importance of making English-language instruction comprehensible to EL students and to the role of comprehension in the development of English proficiency (Echevarria & Vogt, 2008; Krashen, 1985), further research reveals that opportunities for *producing* language are equally important (Lessow-Hurley, 2003; Saunders & O'Brien, 2006; Swain, 2005). When ELs produce language by speaking or writing, they must make grammatical and lexical choices; this process helps them focus on correctness, thereby improving their English proficiency (Snow & Katz, 2010). Producing language allows ELs to automatize their language knowledge and to develop discourse skills (Ellis, 2005).

Social interaction is a critical part of language output; it gives learners feedback on the success of their language production (Lightbown, 2000; Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Opportunities for interaction can also allow students to use different types of language and to express themselves in a variety of ways (Ellis, 2005). The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol model (Echevarria & Vogt, 2008), which has demonstrated gains in ELs' language growth (Cuevas, Lee, Hart, & Deaktor, 2005), stresses the importance of peer interaction. In addition, sociolinguistic learning theory holds that learning is largely a social process in which learners construct meaning through interaction (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). An extensive review of the research on students and motivation concluded that student interaction with peers and with text is important to EL student motivation (Meltzer & Hamann, 2004).

U.S. classrooms do not often give EL students many opportunities to produce language in interactive situations. Though the social nature of learning has become part of the education canon (Halliday, 1980, 1994; Lantolf & Thorne, 2007; Tarone, 2007), its incorporation in classrooms is uneven. For reasons of efficiency and practicality, teacher-centered instruction is the norm for many students for much of the school day. Meltzer and Hamann (2004) note that ELs are unlikely to have adequate opportunities for interaction in mainstream classrooms.

OST programs, by contrast, are well suited to provide EL students with opportunities for English language output and interaction. One reason is sheer numbers: teachers with 25–35 or more students in a class may feel it is daunting and impractical to manage classrooms in which students are often interacting and to plan interactive activities. Large student-teacher ratios also limit opportunities for students to produce language in interaction with the teacher. OST programs, by contrast, often have lower child-to-adult ratios. In addition, the smaller groups often formed in OST settings may lessen the pressure on students over their "performance" in English. For adolescents in particular, embarrassment over making mistakes can hinder language production (Gándara, Gutierrez, & O'Hara, 2001; Gibson, Gándara, & Koyama, 2004). Children and adolescents who come to know one another in an OST setting that is less restrictive and stressful than the school classroom are likely to feel less self-conscious.

The need to meet accountability goals means that classroom teachers often must stick to strict schedules determined by curricular packages that address the skills included on accountability measures. The pace of prescribed activities may not allow for the interaction and language practice that ELs need. OST programs may be able to offer a broader array of types of activities—including interactive activities—and a wider range of choices for students in areas such as art, music, or movement.

Understanding of Individual Differences

All children show important individual differences in their academic progress. When working with ELs, edu-

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cators must consider the added dimension of English proficiency as well as the myriad other differences among ELs in the U.S., including primary language, socioeconomic status, minority vs. majority or immigrant vs. resident status, home literacy and previous schooling experiences, and ethnicity and culture. These factors influence ELs' language and literacy acquisition in complex ways. Research on the most successful English instructional strategies supports the importance of being familiar with students' background knowledge, since instruction that promotes simultaneous content and language learning for ELs builds on students' prior knowledge (Echevarria & Vogt, 2008; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

The diverse language and academic needs of ELs require a variety of educational approaches. ELs benefit from instruction that helps them apply their skills in a variety of situations and formats, including meaningful learning contexts in collaboration with other students (Hakuta & August, 1998). Instruction should include extensive English input that students can comprehend in a variety of oral and written ways (Ellis, 2005). EL students should be provided a range of ways to access instruction, including activities that link visuals, manipulatives, graphic organizers, and similar materials to oral and written language (Snow & Katz, 2010).

The achievement gap between EL and English-proficient students has been ascribed primarily to lack of language proficiency. However, the evidence suggests that ELs get less instructional time, less time in high-quality instruction, and less time learning rigorous content, even though research indicates that content rigor is critical to ELs' academic success (Callahan, 2010). Understanding each EL student's level of content knowledge is a crucial step toward designing instruction that is appropriately rigorous rather than simplified or watered down.

Adults in OST programs have more opportunities to understand the individual ELs they serve and to get to know their families. OST staff can get to know each student better simply because they are responsible for fewer students at a time than are classroom teachers. Staff members who share students' backgrounds can better

understand individual differences and can learn about ELs' educational and other needs by communicating in the primary language. Freedom from the narrow set of instructional strategies imposed by standardized curricula means that, once staff understand students' individual needs, they have more varied toolkits with which to address them.

Motivation and Engagement

While motivation and engagement in instruction have long been recognized as important for all students (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988), an extensive review of the literature by Meltzer and Hamann (2004, 2005; see also Meltzer, 2001) found that motivation is particularly important for EL adolescents. In a later iteration of this research synthesis, Hamann and Reeves (2008) reported that most of these findings about motivation apply to younger EL students as well. Both sets of authors note that the limited curricula frequently offered to ELs significantly hamper engagement and motivation. Often EL curricula are watered down in a mistaken attempt at *sheltering* instruction, which properly refers to modifying instructional strategies in order to make content accessible rather than to modifying or simplifying content (Short, 2002). EL students can also lose motivation because they are placed in lower tracks or provided less challenging—and often less interesting—content (Callahan, 2010). Another perspective that often leads to limited curriculum for ELs is the view that English language development is all they need—at the expense of rigorous and interesting content (Gold & Maxwell-Jolly, 2006).

Based on their literature review, Meltzer and Hamann (2004) present three key principles that are critical to engaging and motivating EL students. One has to do with opportunities for practice and interaction, discussed above. The other two principles are:

- **Making connections to students' lives.** Instruction must connect to ELs' previous learning and experience—to what students already know, what they need to know, and what excites them.
- **Creating safe and responsive classrooms.** ELs need to feel safe and accepted in their learning environments, especially since many already feel marginal to U.S. society. Adolescents are often anxious about doing or saying the wrong thing—particularly in a new social environment for which they do not know the rules. A

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relationship of trust with a teacher can contribute to student success, so learning environments need to provide the time for such relationships to flourish.

Evaluations have shown that OST programs have the ability to increase student motivation and engagement. In an evaluation of four afterschool programs, Kane (2004) found that participating youth reported that they were more engaged and paid greater attention in class than they did before joining the program. This finding, though not specific to ELs, supports the potential such programs have to build engagement among all students. An evaluation of five San Francisco Beacons Network afterschool centers serving predominantly racial and cultural minority youth revealed that supportive relationships with program staff constituted one of the most important reasons students decided to participate in afterschool activities (Strobel, Kirshner, O'Donoghue, & McLaughlin, 2008). Evaluators of LA's BEST, which serves many cultural and linguistic minority youth, reported that students who felt supported by staff expressed greater motivation to do well in school (Huang et al., 2007). Evaluators of an afterschool program serving Hmong students found that a key to the program' success was that staff members understood students' culture, history, and family structure and communicated with students in their native language. This cultural competency created relationships of trust that allowed youth to express their Hmong identities (Lee & Hawkins, 2008). Similarly, the Harvard Family Research Project's (2008) literature review on promoting positive outcomes for disadvantaged youth in afterschool programs highlighted the importance of well-prepared staff who can build strong relationships with youth and foster caring interactions.

In addition, many OST programs offer a variety of activities—arts, dance, sports, and more—that can engage student interests, thereby providing opportunities for language and other learning.

Connection to Home and Family

School staff often lack familiarity with the backgrounds of EL students, just as students' families often lack understanding of the culture of school. Yet connections between home and school are important factors in students' education. In a study of 14 urban schools with

high minority populations, researchers found frequent teacher-to-home communication to be a common factor in classrooms where students' academic achievement was highest (Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 2000). In addition, research has found a high correlation between parental involvement and minority students' positive academic outcomes (Desimone, 1999; Keith et al., 1998; Nye, Turner, & Schwartz, 2006; Trotman, 2001; Zellman & Waterman, 1998).

Educators and educational institutions need to be able to appreciate the culture of their students. Parents' aspirations for their children and ways of supporting their children's education may not be evident to teachers who are unfamiliar with students' cultural backgrounds (Arvizu, 1996; Valdés, 1996). Educators must learn to view students' families as a valuable asset and to tap home and community resources (Moll, 1988; González et al., 1994). Zeichner (1996) found that teachers whose culturally and linguistically diverse students achieved academic success linked the curriculum to the students' culture. Erbstein and Miller (2008) report that:

> Research on schools and programs that appear to be closing the achievement gap demonstrates that many of these successes benefit from, or even rely upon, partnerships among schools, community members, and institutions to reduce ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic disparities in educational outcomes. (p. 1)

The Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (1999) includes the need to connect curriculum to students' home culture and community in its standards for effective teaching practice.

Kane (2004) found consistent results across several afterschool program evaluations indicating that parents of participating children became more involved in their children's schools. Though this research was not specific to EL students, it holds promise that OST programs can foster the home-school connections that are vital to the success of ELs. The afterschool program described above that focused on staff knowledge of Hmong students' culture, history, and family structure (Lee & Hawkins, 2008) also illustrates the potential of OST programs to make home-school connections. Furthermore, many OST programs are administered or sponsored by community organizations; whether this is the case or not, community members often work in these programs, either as paid staff or volunteers. Thus, a home-community connection is an integral feature of many, if not most, OST programs. Finally, parents of ELs who feel "at sea" when dealing with school staff or school rules (Torrez, 2004) can con-nect with their children's education in an atmosphere that may seem less restrictive and daunting than that of the school—particularly when OST educators speak the families' primary languages.

Recommendations

Research supports the potential for OST programs to provide the much-needed resource of time for ELs to meet the dual challenge of learning English while learning content *through* English. An emerging evaluation literature supports the positive effects of afterschool programs when EL students participate regularly and have strong adult support. Moreover, a number of research-supported strategies for improving EL achievement can potentially be applied in OST settings: incorporating primary language use, providing opportunities for practice and interaction in a relatively risk-free environment, addressing ELs' individual differences including a wide range of backgrounds and English proficiency, fostering student motivation and engagement, and promoting connections with students' families and communities.

In order to move from potential to positive outcomes for ELs, OST educators and administrators must plan how best to make use of the precious resource of extra time that OST programs provide. My research review suggests the following recommendations:

Coordination between OST and school staff. The research outlined above suggests that ELs can learn more easily when OST staff employ strategies different from those of the school day. However, these strategies—such as communicating in the student's primary language—can be used to focus on school content, part or all of which ELs may miss. Coordinated planning with school staff will help OST staff address ELs' language and content needs in activities that may not be available during the school day.

Intentional planning. The extra time OST programs offer lends itself to the interactive activities that ELs need to practice their language skills but that often do not fit into the confines of the school day. ELs may also be more comfortable practicing their English in the less restrictive environment of the OST program. To facilitate ELs' participation, opportunities for interaction and practice should be designed to meet specific objectives and should include intentional correction and feedback (Saunders & Goldenberg, 2010).

Professional development. While most of the instructional strategies that work for EL students are also effec-

tive with non-English learners, the converse is not always the case (Goldenberg, 2008). OST educators need to understand the specific learning needs of EL students and learn how to address them.

Staffing. OST programs should actively work to recruit, hire, train, and retain staff who share the backgrounds of the programs' ELs and their families. Recruiting people who live in the community where the OST program is situated helps to ensure that staff represent the linguistic, ethnic, and cultural characteristics of the students. Programs should also attempt to attract staff with expertise in working with ELs.

Funding for training and technical assistance. State education agencies should direct technical assistance funding (from 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants, for example) toward programs that serve high numbers of ELs. Training and technical assistance should focus on meeting the educational, social, and emotional needs of OST participants.

Economic hardship, increasing focus on accountability, and alarm over the achievement gap between ELs and their English-fluent peers bring parents, educators, policymakers, and the public to seek direction on the best use of scarce resources. However, the emerging evaluation research indicating the potential of OST programs to promote EL achievement is scant. In the future, evaluations of OST programs should include a focus on the effects for ELs. Such evaluations can provide direction on ways to organize and implement OST programs to produce maximum positive impact on EL students.

Acknowledgment

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learning english and beyond

A Holistic Approach to Supporting English Learners in Afterschool

by Jhumpa Bhattacharya and Jimena Quiroga

Throughout the nation, afterschool programs are seeing increasing numbers of English learners (ELs) among their participants. Over 8 million school-age youth with limited English proficiency now live in the U.S., representing about one in six of the nation's 5 to 17-year-olds. Afterschool programs report that just one-quarter of them currently serve ELs (California Tomorrow, 2003);

reports suggest that the number of ELs will be increasing. By the year 2030, it is projected that 40 percent of the school-aged population in the nation will be language minorities (McNeir & Wambalaba, 2006).

In California the story is similar. The state has seen a rapid rise in the number of afterschool programs due to Proposition 49, a voter-approved initiative that dramatically increased funding for afterschool programs from $50 million in 1999 to $550 million in 2007. The California initiative especially targeted funds to programs in the most economically disadvantaged communities. In California, 54 percent of children of immi-

grants live in poverty (Urban Institute, 2006). ELs constitute 25 percent of all public school students (Goldsmith, Jucovy, & Arbreton, 2008)—the highest

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percentage of any state in the nation. It is thus no wonder that afterschool programs in California are seeing a significant and increasing population of immigrant students and ELs among their participants.

These numbers pose an exciting opportunity for afterschool programs to meet the needs of a diverse and largely at-risk population. ELs are often academically and economically vulnerable, yet they come from backgrounds rich in culture, language, and family values. As part of a field deeply rooted in youth development and centered around youth support, afterschool programs are poised to capitalize on their strong influence on participating youth in order to provide much-needed academic support to ELs while validating students' cultural identity and providing the social and emotional support they need.

Many afterschool program practitioners, recognizing the growth in the EL population in their programs, are hungry for professional development and research to understand how better to educate this population. However, reports indicate that, although practitioners recognize that this growing population has specific needs, they do not have the skills or training to work effectively with ELs. As a result, afterschool sites are not currently designing their programming to serve ELs effectively, and minimal resources and professional development opportunities are available to help them do so (Zarate & Alliance for a Better Community, 2009).

Most of the few professional development resources that are available focus on teaching English. Although these resources are valuable, this limited focus could lead the afterschool field to define EL success as attaining English fluency only. While learning English has to be a core goal for ELs, the field must not focus its attention solely on teaching English. EL students have a host of cultural, social, and emotional needs. Many are recuperating from war and other traumas; nearly all deal with culture shock and need support in order to develop healthy cultural identities, break their isolation from mainstream American culture, and build cross-cultural and leadership skills. Afterschool programs can play a unique role in attending to these needs, which must be addressed if ELs are to thrive and be successful as students and as adults. Relatively free of the mandates that constrain schools, afterschool programs can offer creative and effective programming that builds on the strengths of ELs and redefines their success to incorporate not only acquiring English but also growing into well-rounded, active, and empowered members of society.

English Learners in Context

As afterschool practitioners begin to look at working more effectively with EL and immigrant students, they need to understand the context from which most of these students are entering programs. Traditionally, ELs are disproportionately concentrated in overcrowded, under-resourced schools with the least trained teachers. Living in linguistically isolated communities, they face the double challenge of mastering English along with grade-level content. Their teachers have typically not been supported to learn strategies or skills to help students who aren't fluent in English. As a result, ELs have fared poorly in our public education system; they have alarmingly low graduation rates and test scores along with high dropout rates.

In addition, since most education policy is framed by politics rather than by educational research, there is a large gap between, on the one hand, what the research says about language development and effective practices to support ELs and, on the other, what is actually implemented in schools. For example, ELs are given little time in school for oral practice, an element most experts consider key in learning a new language (August & Shanahan, 2006). Many K–12 programs also fail to take into account the research indicating that second language learning is more effective when the home language is also nurtured and developed (Olsen & Romero, 2006). Learners with a strong home language can translate from it and draw on it for support in learning a new language. Research also indicates that children who are bilingual have higher brain function than their monolingual classmates (Lambert, Genesee, Holobow, & Chartrand, 1993). However, policymakers often discourage bilingualism. English-only policies and programming can eradicate any home language development that may have occurred in the early years. EL children are losing their home languages faster than they did decades ago, resulting in tremendous fragmentation in immigrant commu-

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nities as young people can no longer communicate with relatives and community members (Fillmore, 1991).

Schools also tend to isolate their ELs, giving them little time to interact with English-fluent classmates. Socially, this isolation often prevents ELs from feeling that they fully belong to their school or larger community. They often feel excluded as second-class citizens (Valdes, 2001). Frequently they disengage from school altogether.

Furthermore, teachers are generally not given training or support to understand that ELs are a diverse group; they often lump all ELs together as one group with the same needs. However, different ELs need different kinds of support, depending on their backgrounds. For example, ELs who are refugees and newcomers will have very different needs from those who were born in this country and are "long-term" ELs, defined as those who have been designated as ELs for more than four years.

All of these issues contribute to the difficulty ELs experience in succeeding in school and in society. Afterschool programs can play a part in changing this context.

A Holistic Approach to Understanding English Learners' Needs

So much attention is given in schools to teaching ELs English that little attention is paid to their social and emotional needs. By understanding and addressing these multiple needs, the afterschool field can empower ELs to achieve.

ELs come from all over the globe and from various socio-economic and political contexts. In one afterschool program, practitioners may see some ELs who are dealing with the trauma that caused their families to flee their home country, others who have left large parts of their family behind and feel guilty about being the "lucky ones" who emigrated, and yet others whose families are finding it difficult to put food on the table and need the children to go to work as soon as possible. All of these factors lead to different needs that practitioners must understand in order to successfully work with ELs.

ELs are attempting to learn not only a new language but also an entirely new culture. This frequently stressful experience can impede young ELs' academic and social progress. Newcomers can experience another form of culture shock when their previous expectations of U.S.

culture are very different from the reality they are living. In addition to being in a new country, immigrant students are in new schools and an unfamiliar educational system. All this newness can make young people feel overwhelmed, isolated, and vulnerable.

Youth are also beginning to adapt and incorporate aspects of this new culture into their ways of being. Surrounded by images, books, and movies that do not include their cultural backgrounds, they often struggle to see how and where they belong in their new society. These young people need help to nurture their cultural identity and build their self-esteem. Unless they are given appropriate guidance and encouragement to retain their home cultures, the pressure to assimilate, along with the negative attitudes they encounter toward their home cultures, can lead them to abandon their native heritages. This break from their home cultures can lead to destructive behavior such as gang involvement, drug and alcohol abuse, and a general discontentment with or anger toward society (Holcomb-McCoy, 2005). Afterschool programs can involve the families of ELs to avoid exacerbating the disconnect between home and school.

ELs who have been in the U.S. for a long time or were born here often are disengaged from school; they feel disempowered by schools' low expectations of them and often stay socially isolated. These students need engaging learning opportunities that recognize their strengths and help them to build strong leadership and cross-cultural skills. Such strategies help ELs feel empowered and engaged in a learning environment, feelings that can combat their disengagement and help them achieve in school.

When they understand the various needs of different ELs, afterschool programs can adopt a holistic approach to nurturing EL students in their many dimensions. Afterschool practitioners must build on the strengths and assets that ELs bring into the program, such as their rich cultures and languages, while also addressing their varying needs.

Redefining Success for English Learners in Afterschool Programs

More and more afterschool programs are implementing strategies to help ELs with English language develop-

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ment. While some of the strategies being offered are valuable, programs need to use the same intentionality to support ELs' social, emotional, and cultural needs. To guide them in doing so, California Tomorrow developed the following Quality English Learner Principles:

1. Know your English language learners
2. Be cultural brokers for families and communities
3. Build cross-cultural leadership skills
4. Support language development
5. Create a safe space and affirming environment
6. Promote home culture and language for healthy identity development
7. Customize programming

These principles incorporate California Tomorrow's comprehensive vision of what EL education can look like in afterschool programs, based on its 25 years of experience in reforming EL K–12 education and on 10 years of research, technical assistance, and coaching experience in the afterschool field (Bhattacharya, Jaramillo, Lopez, Olsen, Scharf, & Shah, 2004; California Tomorrow, 2003).

Know Your English Language Learners

According to the Alliance for a Better Community's recent research report, "data on who is an English Learner is generally not provided" by afterschool programs (Zarate & Alliance for a Better Community, 2009, p. 8). While some program staff may be inclined to identify ELs by whether they speak another language at home or by perceived oral fluency, such assumptions can lead to inaccurate conclusions about which program participants are actually ELs. Programs should have access to and use students' English language assessment scores to obtain a more accurate picture of students' language development needs.

Furthermore, the simple term "English learner" does not depict the richness and diversity of EL experience and needs. Once a program knows which students really are classified as ELs in school, it can take the next step—exploring the diversity of its EL population by looking at, for example, nationality, immigration experience, and other facets described above. This exploration can entail a deep analysis of the program's EL demographics. Programs may also create opportunities to learn more about their students' experiences through student surveys and focus groups and by providing creative and interactive activities in which students can share their experiences in a safe environment.

Be Cultural Brokers for Families and Communities

Afterschool programs can play a crucial role as cultural brokers not only for the students in their programs, but also for their families. EL students' families often need information about how to meet their own basic needs or about how the U.S. school system works. Though afterschool programs rarely have the resources to provide all of the services ELs and their families need, they can point families toward services that already exist in their communities but that the families may not know how to access. Program staff can take inventory of the community, compile a list of resources for EL students and families, and translate it into the languages represented in the program and the neighborhood. Examples of relevant resources include free medical and legal clinics, food banks, translation services, citizenship classes, cultural centers, and more. Programs can also hold informational meetings for parents—in their home languages—explaining how the U.S. school system works, what tests students are expected to pass, and so on.

Build Cross-Cultural Leadership Skills

EL students are often isolated during the school day, making it difficult for them to connect and build friendships with monolingual English speakers. Afterschool programs can strategically help build connections be-

tween EL students and monolingual English speakers, in the process enabling both groups to gain much-needed cross-cultural skills.

As our communities become more and more diverse, young people need to understand the concept of culture and to be sensitive to people from ethnic or cultural backgrounds different from their own, adapting to these difference in their interactions with others. As young people develop awareness of and respect for their own heritages and those of others, the next step is better communication to ease tense intergroup relations. Developing cross-cultural skills helps young people mediate conflicts when they arise so that diverse communities can co-exist harmoniously.

In an afterschool program called Bridging Multiple Worlds (Bhattacharya, Olsen, & Quiroga, 2007), EL students and monolingual English speakers were intentionally brought together to participate in interactive activities that explored the concept of culture. They learned about various cultural and ethnic forms of music and how these forms influenced one another, developed informative and fun bulletin boards around the school commemorating cultural and ethnic holidays, created collages about their cultures, and discussed their cultures with one another. For many students, this was the first time they had ever talked about the topic of culture. As students shared about their cultures, they began to better understand the differences and identify the similarities amongst their cultures. Ultimately new friendships developed across cultures and languages. Other programs can incorporate similar approaches to cultivate cross-cultural leadership skills in young people.

Support Language Development

Afterschool programs must support ELs' language development both in English and in their home languages. During the school day, much of the attention goes to oral fluency in English, leaving EL students with limited literacy skills in both languages. Research indicates that both languages need to be addressed and supported in order for language learners to attain true fluency and literacy (Goldenberg, 2008). The bottom line is that ELs need language development generally, not only in oral English, in order to succeed academically and socially.

Home language development can be incorporated into afterschool programming in various ways. In a program in Oakland, CA, students are placed in language-specific groups for the homework help segment of the program day. Parents of ELs in this program said that this format provided a comfortable way for students to connect with school (Bhattacharya, Jaramillo, Lopez, Olsen, Scharf, & Shah, 2004). Additionally, some programs allow ELs the option of writing in their home language or in English when they do "quick writes." In this

way, ELs not only can practice writing in their home language, but also can express deeper analysis and critical thinking skills in the language with which they are most comfortable. Even stocking the program's library with books written in students' home languages can be a valuable step.

Afterschool practitioners need to recognize the difference between social and academic English language skills. Young people attain "playground" English much more quickly than they learn the language necessary to succeed academically. In order to develop the academic vocabulary of EL participants, afterschool program staff can explicitly teach academic vocabulary related to the content of school lessons, as well as vocabulary related to program activities, during tutoring sessions. Furthermore, program staff can use visual cues and graphics to help young people understand concepts and expand their vocabulary.

Create a Safe Space and Affirming Environment

ELs need affirming environments where they feel emotionally and physically safe. Linguist Stephen Krashen (1981) talks about the "affective filter," which requires that people feel emotionally safe in order to acquire a new language. Programs can intentionally create environments where ELs feel safe by creating group agreements among participants and staff that no one will be ridiculed if they say something incorrectly. Such agreements can also specify that anti-immigrant and anti-bilingual comments are not tolerated. If any participant or staff member makes such comments, they should be addressed immediately in order to deal with hurt feelings. Creating a safe environment can help to build EL participants' confidence as they practice oral English as well as support their emotional and social development.

Promote Home Culture & Language for Healthy Identity Development

As young people begin to settle into a new culture, they are often surrounded by negative sentiments about their home cultures that make it easy for them to feel ashamed of and ultimately abandon their cultures and their home languages. Programs can provide structured opportunities for students to talk openly about their cultures and learn about other participants' cultures. Providing materials such as books, videos, and posters in partici-

> ELs need to be given explicit permission and encouragement to speak their own languages. True bilingualism is a much-needed skill in today's global society.

pants' home languages is a good way to begin to promote diverse cultures, helping to normalize students' communities and allowing them to feel proud of their cultural identities.

One activity that afterschool programs could adopt is to have participants research artists, activists, poets, scientists, journalists, and musicians from their cultural communities and then present their findings. Having staff members talk about their own cultures is a great way to model having pride in one's heritage. Similarly, ELs need to be given explicit permission and encouragement to speak their own languages. True bilingualism is a much-needed skill in today's global society.

Customize Programming

Once afterschool programs can identify their EL populations and assess the diversity of their ELs, administrators and teachers can design program content that addresses these ELs' specific needs. For example, program staff can incorporate visual cues into instruction for very limited English speakers while facilitating discussion groups that incorporate critical thinking and analysis for students who are more fluent. If a program finds that it has a number of students who have emigrated from war-torn countries or have other difficult immigration experiences, staff can be trained to better understand and support these youth.

Professional Development Needs

Professional development in supporting English language development in afterschool programs is quickly emerging. Unfortunately, professional development in addressing ELs' cultural, social, and emotional needs remains scarce. Professional development that enables staff to deepen their understanding of the varied dimensions of EL needs must become a priority. Though afterschool programs struggle to provide deeper and longer training despite limited funding and the part-time availability of staff, professional development to address the needs of ELs nevertheless must be given the time it truly requires to equip staff with skills and strategies to properly support this vulnerable population.

Because of the complex nature of the many needs of ELs, this professional development must be deep and intense, going beyond merely "picking up a few strategies."

Afterschool program staff need to fully understand ELs' experiences so that they can relate to and support this population. Specifically, professional development should enable afterschool staff to:

- Understand the diversity of the EL population in terms of nationality, educational background in their home country, immigration experience, and so on
- Work closely with the school staff to understand what kind of English-acquisition programs are being given their participants—for example, bilingual, English immersion, or two-way immersion—so that they can determine what types of support to offer
- Know where to find important data such as English language assessment scores and how to interpret and use these data
- Be familiar with research regarding brain development, language development, and the relationship between home language literacy and second language development
- Understand the importance of developing participants' cultural identities and have the skills to implement programmatic supports
- Know specific strategies for supporting English language development in the afterschool context

The afterschool field is poised to engage ELs and to enable them to succeed both academically and socially. We can make a significant impact on the lives of these youth, breaking their isolation and helping them develop into empowered, successful adults—as long as we are committed to building well-rounded individuals who are thriving academically and emotionally, who are grounded in their cultures and languages, and who see themselves as active civic participants ready to join in creating the equitable society we all desire.

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éxito

Keeping High-risk Youth on Track to Graduation through Out-of-school Time Supports

by Tracey Hartmann, Deborah Good, and Kimberly Edmunds

Éxito means *success* in Spanish, so it is a fitting name for a dropout prevention program. Set in a large neighborhood high school in a low-income, largely Latino section of Philadelphia, Éxito supports ninth- and tenth-grade students who are at risk of dropping out of school by providing them with afterschool programming and case management services. The program was designed and is implemented by a large multiservice community agency, Congreso de Latinos Unidos[1] (Congreso), working in partnership with the school. Funding comes from Philadelphia's Department of Human Services and from private foundations.

When Éxito was launched in the 2008–09 school year, Congreso contracted a four-year longitudinal evaluation following the first cohort of program participants through high school graduation. The evaluation, now in its third year, has assessed student outcomes and studied program implementation. Results from the first two years suggest that Éxito shows promise for reducing the dropout rate among those it serves. The program has

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attracted teens with "early warning indicators" for dropping out of school. In addition, program participation has been associated with positive student outcomes. Participants had fewer school absences than a comparison group for both of the first two years of the program; in year 2, they were also more likely to pass major subjects than a comparison group. This article describes the Éxito program model, provides early evidence of its benefits, and shares promising practices as well as challenges identified by the evaluation.

Éxito in Context

Philadelphia, like many urban areas, faces a staggering dropout rate. Between 42 and 46 percent of students do not graduate from high school within six years (Neild & Balfanz, 2006). The dropout rate is highest among ninth graders, who encounter new social dynamics and greater academic expectations on entering high school (Neild, 2009; Newman, Lohman, Newman, Myers, & Smith, 2000). Philadelphia-based research has found the transition to high school to be most challenging in the city's nonselective neighborhood high schools (Neild & Balfanz, 2006; Gold et al., 2010). Many of these schools are chronically underperforming, present significant climate problems, and offer insufficient resources and student supports. At these schools, 21 percent of students drop out each year (Neild & Balfanz, 2006).

Students drop out of school for many reasons, but research points to several school-based factors that are likely contributors. Students often enter low-income urban high schools academically unprepared because they attended under-resourced elementary and middle schools; they often experience failure in high school courses (Balfanz & Letgers, 2004). Many also attend large high schools, where they feel anonymous and have difficulty connecting to peers and teachers (Balfanz & Letgers, 2004). Low-resourced schools generally offer few extracurricular activities in which youth could develop peer connections. Consequently, many students do not develop a sense of belonging to, identification with, or engagement in school (Dynarski et al., 2008).

Many large urban high schools also experience cli-

mate problems that can create significant stress for students who may already experience distressing situations in their homes and neighborhoods as a result of poverty. Without adult guidance, adolescents may cope with this stress in ways that make sense to them in the short term—skipping school to avoid getting into a fight, for example—but are detrimental in the long term (Spencer, 1999).

While school reforms are needed to address the root causes of dropping out, research on out-of-school time (OST) programs like Éxito suggest that they also have a role to play in improving graduation rates. OST programs have been found to create educational resilience in educationally vulnerable youth (Peck, Roeser, Zarrett, & Eccles, 2008). They offer youth opportunities to encounter caring adults who can help them cope with daily stresses (Spencer, 1999) and to develop positive peer relationships that can foster a sense of belonging (Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003). In addition, OST programs can give students a chance to experience success so that they can develop a sense of competence (Kurtines et al., 2008). OST programs can also bolster students' academic skills, particularly in math, if the academic assistance is of sufficient duration (Lauer et al., 2006). All of these experiences foster positive identity development, which enables youth to better navigate the transition to high school and adulthood (Kurtines et al., 2008; Spencer, 1999).

Students who eventually drop out of high school, however, are often significantly behind before they reach ninth grade. These students need more individualized and intensive support than group-oriented OST programs typically provide. Strategies shown to have impact include monitoring attendance and behavior as well as providing adult advocates for individual youth (Dynarski et al., 2008; Kennelly & Monrad, 2007). Academic supports are also most effective if delivered one-to-one or in small groups (Lauer et al., 2006).

Experts on dropout prevention also recommend that programs use research-based "early warning systems" to identify students who are at risk of dropping out. In 2006, Neild and Balfanz found that Philadelphia students who had either failed a major subject or were attending

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school less than 80 percent of the time at the end of eighth grade had a 75 percent chance of dropping out once they reached high school. Additional research found that certain kinds of negative behavior were also associated with dropping out (Neild, 2009). These findings point to the importance of reaching ninth-grade students in neighborhood high schools who experienced one or more of these "early warning signs" in eighth grade.

However, students with these early warning characteristics are often the most challenging students for OST programs to serve, because they have already started to disengage from school. High school youth typically have more control of their own time than do younger children; they often opt out of OST services when faced with greater needs or competing interests (Arbreton, Bradshaw, Metz, & Sheldon, 2008). To make an impact on the dropout problem, then, Éxito needed to attract at-risk youth, keep them engaged, and provide individualized and intensive supports.

Éxito Program Model

In 2009–10, when Éxito was in its second year, elements of the program model were continuing to be refined. By the end of year 2, the model had settled into an approach based on existing research:

- Identify and recruit students showing early warning signs of dropping out
- Engage students in a project-based afterschool program
- Provide case management services to those in greatest need of support

Targeted Recruitment

Éxito's design targeted four "early warning indicators" of later dropout—80 percent attendance or less in eighth grade, failure in math, failure in English, or two or more suspensions in eighth grade or early ninth grade. The program actively recruited students with one or more of these characteristics while remaining open to other students. In the second year, the program aimed to enroll 125 students, with 80 percent of enrollees displaying one or more early warning indicators.

Afterschool Project-based Learning

In year 2, Éxito interventions centered on an afterschool program that took place at the host school four days a week. In this program, students had the opportunity to socialize with peers and adults, receive homework help, and participate in project-based learning groups. The projects centered on art, music, and career-related themes including Latin percussion, culinary arts, graphic arts, storytelling, robotics, and entrepreneurship. When students enrolled in Éxito, they selected one project that interested them and remained with that project group all year.

Case Management Services

Group activities were supplemented with case management supports for participants who had particularly serious mental health or behavioral challenges, such as truancy, or who were known to have serious family- or peer-related issues. At any given time, one-quarter to one-half of participants received these intensive supports. Two bilingual case managers carried caseloads of no more than 15 students at a time; they served 41 students over the course of the year. Case workers aimed to identify and remove barriers to students' success through regular meetings with students and their families, goal-setting activities, and referrals to additional resources.

Evaluation Methods

The second-year evaluation of the program drew on the following sources of data:

- Interviews and focus groups with Éxito staff and students
- Observations of the program and of program-related meetings
- Enrollment and participation data collected by Congreso staff
- School records including data on student grades, attendance, and behavior

Evaluators compared Éxito student outcomes with those of students at the host school who were in the same grade and also had early warning indicators but did not attend the OST program. Logistic regression models tested whether Éxito students were more or less likely than other students to have an early warning indicator at the end of the school year. The regression analysis allowed us to assess the impact of the program while taking into account not only *whether* a student participated in Éxito, but also the student's *level of participation* as measured by the number of days of attendance.

Promising Outcomes

In the first year, the evaluation found positive outcomes primarily for students who experienced both Éxito components—the afterschool program and the case management services. In the second year, positive outcomes were observed particularly for students in the afterschool program. The results for students who also received case management services in year 2 were more mixed.

Table 1. Regression Results for All Participants

	MODEL 1 Afterschool Dosage (All participants)		MODEL 2 Afterschool Dosage (Case management students omitted)		MODEL 3 Case management students only	
	Odds-Ratio	**Sig.**	**Odds-Ratio**	**Sig.**	**Odds Ratio**	**Sig.**
Failed math	**.984**	**.043***	.976	.065	1.02	.978
Failed English	.992	.233	**.970**	**.014***	**2.96**	**.044***
Two or more suspensions	1.01	.301	.981	.276	3.56	.06†
Less than 80 percent attendance	**.966**	**.003***	.970	.055†	.343	.087†
Promoted	1.01	.314	**1.06**	**.040***	.80	.75

*p < .05   †p < .10

Table 1 shows the year 2 results. The odds ratios in the table indicate the likelihood that an Éxito student would have one of the early warning indicators at the end of the school year as compared to a similar student who didn't participate in the program. Odds ratios below zero indicate that an Éxito student was less likely than a similar student to have the early warning indicator while odds ratios above zero indicate that an Éxito student was more likely to have that outcome. The p-values indicate the level of confidence that differences are not simply the result of chance; p-values of less than .05 demonstrate a high confidence that the differences were real and generalizable. In the body of the table, statistically significant results are shown in boldface.

The second-year evaluation found that:

• For each day of Éxito attended, participants were 1.6 percent less likely to fail math than similar students (Table 1, Model 1). Therefore, students who attended the average number of days (32) were 40.1 percent less likely to fail math than students in the comparison group.

• For each day of Éxito attended, students were 3.4 percent less likely have the attendance risk indicator than were similar students (Table 1, Model 1). Students who attended the average number of days were 67.4 percent less likely to have the attendance risk indicator.

• Students in the afterschool program but not receiving case management services (Table 1, Model 2) were 3 percent less likely than similar students to fail English for each day attended and 6 percent more likely to be promoted to the next grade for each day attended.

• Students receiving case management services were 66 percent less likely than similar students to have the attendance risk indicator at the end of the year (Table 1, Model 3). This finding replicates the positive finding for case management supports observed in year 1; the difference was large though not statistically significant.

On the less positive side, students receiving case management services were three times as likely as similar students to have failed English and 3.6 times as likely to have been suspended two or more times, respectively. One explanation is that the comparison group, students who demonstrated early warning indicators, may have had fewer issues than did students who were chosen for case management services because they had socioemotional, peer, or family challenges in addition to early warning indicators. In addition, case managers reported that they experienced challenges in engaging about a third of the students referred to case management in year 2. These challenges, outlined later in this article, may have muted the impact case managers could have on students.

Éxito had higher average daily attendance in year 2 than in year 1, perhaps in part because of program modifications including many of the promising practices described in the next section. The program was also more successful in attracting students who demonstrated early warning indicators. The program enrolled 112 ninth and tenth graders, 70 percent of whom displayed early warning indicators, at the beginning of the 2009–10 school year. Students continued to enroll throughout the year;

participation peaked in May with 92 active participants. Participants attended, on average, twice a week.

Promising Practices

Data from the implementation study point to several promising practices that contributed to Éxito's success in recruiting and supporting youth. Six of these are discussed below:

- School-based staff and program activities
- Open enrollment with targeted recruitment
- Supportive program climate
- Relevant, hands-on activities
- Opportunities for success
- Individualized support and monitoring

School-based staff and program activities

Éxito was set in the school building, using the cafeteria and classrooms for afterschool activities. Program staff members were given office space in the school, and, as a result, spent much of their day there. This arrangement required a strong school-program partnership, which Éxito staff worked hard to build and sustain. Mutual trust was initially facilitated in part by Congreso's reputation and by personal relationships with school administrators; regular meetings with school administration and responsiveness to school staff's concerns helped to maintain that trust.

Being based in the school was a significant asset for Éxito. The program's easy accessibility may have contributed to higher levels of program attendance than might have been achieved if students had had to travel. Easy access to program activities has been found to help in recruiting teen participation (Arbreton et al., 2008; Kauh, 2010).

However, being based in the school is an asset only if the program does not feel too much like school (Lauer et al., 2006). After hearing student complaints in year 1, staff worked in year 2 to differentiate the program from the school day.

- The program began with a gathering period that gave students a chance to unwind.
- Group tutoring, a primary program component in year 1, was replaced with project-based learning and individual tutoring.
- Community providers, rather than school teachers, were hired to lead most of the project-based learning activities.

Subsequently, student perceptions of the program improved and the attendance rate doubled from an average of once a week in year 1 to an average of twice a week in year 2.

Equally important was the fact that staff spent time in the building during the school day. The program coordinator and assistant program coordinator walked the ninth- and tenth-grade hallways between classes, reminding and cajoling students to attend the program. They also frequented the cafeteria during ninth- and tenth-grade lunch periods, taking time to sit and talk with students. Their presence in the school also allowed them to develop relationships with guidance counselors, administrators, and teachers; these relationships ultimately facilitated participant referrals.

Open Enrollment with Targeted Recruitment

Éxito advertised open enrollment but adopted targeted recruitment strategies to ensure that most students served had early warning indicators. First, program staff obtained the names of students with one or more early warning indicators from teachers and guidance counselors. Then staff members contacted each student and his or her parents or guardians individually. As the program coordinator described it:

> I would literally sit there in the mornings with [guidance counselors], and they would have a list of students and…bring them in one by one. And I would talk to them and engage them, see where they're going, get the parents on the phone.

After meeting students, the program coordinator would follow up in the hallways and cafeteria, continuing to extend the invitation. A number of students told us that they needed multiple invitations before they decided to try the program. Once students started attending, program staff encouraged them to invite friends. Often these friends also displayed early warning indicators.

However, despite the success of these targeted recruitment efforts, an element of self-selection remained. One student focus group described program participants as the "good kids" in the school. To make sense of this claim, the evaluation took a deeper look at the characteristics of students entering the program. While the majority of students in the program had one or more early warning indicators prior to enrolling, only 8 percent had had been suspended two or more times. Apparently the majority of participants, though in danger of dropping out, were not the students who were frequently disrupting classes or getting involved in fights.

Supportive Program Climate

As with many successful OST programs (Deschenes et al., 2010), students and staff reported that the climate of

the program—particularly positive relationships among youth and between youth and staff—was what kept participants coming back. Four strategies in particular enabled Éxito to cultivate a supportive program climate:

- Gathering time
- Low youth-to-adult ratio and small groups
- Quality, caring staff
- Positive norm setting

Gathering Time

After school ended, Éxito students had 30–45 minutes in the school cafeteria to enjoy a snack and socialize with peers and staff. This component of the program is in keeping with current research suggesting that providing unstructured time helps OST programs to retain older youth (Arbreton et al., 2008). This strategy also gave students time to develop relationships with their peers and adult staff. In our observations, we noted that the staff used this time to check in with students and give them attention and support. Staff reported that this time was important because it gave students a chance to unload the stresses of the school day. One staff member explained:

> I made sure we were all available right at 2:45, having those conversations. "What happened today? How was your day?" Because right after that point, they don't talk. They don't tell their parents what's going on. So we are that source, right there after school, for them. They get to talk; they tell us everything. You have conversations that make them think: "Let's look at this differently. You think if you didn't speak to the teacher that way, it would have turned out differently?"

Students reported that staff were accessible if they needed to talk. One student commented, "If we have a problem, we can always go to them and talk to them. They're always there to listen."

Low Youth-to-Adult Ratio and Small Groups

A low student-to-adult ratio, averaging one adult to 10 students during gathering time and one adult to four students in project groups, allowed staff members to pay attention to each student individually. Students appreciated the ability to receive individual attention in their project groups. As one student stated, "They make sure they help you a lot. So I like it." Within the project groups, instructors encouraged students to work together and fostered positive interactions among students. For example, the music instructor regularly asked more ex-

perienced students to teach newer students, and the storytelling project required students to share personal stories with one another. One music student said, "Everybody helps each other. If I'm not playing something right, we help each other; we practice. Everybody is like family."

Quality, Caring Staff

The consensus in our conversations with youth was that Éxito staff members were both caring and trustworthy. A student articulated this sense of trust:

> Say if I come in a bad mood, they'll be, like, "What's wrong?" And they'll sit me down, and they'll talk to me about it, and they'll tell me, like, "Don't worry about it"—and I can count on them. That's what I'm trying to say, I can count on them.

Staff leveraged the trust they had earned to correct and guide students as they coped with the stresses of their lives. Many students with whom we spoke seemed to take the guidance of Éxito staff to heart. One student explained:

> She tells you, "You're not supposed to do that, you're supposed to do this," so she actually corrects you, and she gives you good advice. If you're having a stressed day and she can see it, she will just ask you, "Are you okay?"

A couple of students also described the ways in which the guidance they received in the program helped them make better decisions in school. One student commented, "I got better grades since I got in this program…because [the program coordinator] always tried to talk me out of stupid stuff I do. She helps me…do the right thing."

Positive Norm Setting

The low youth-to-adult ratio and the caring relationships staff had with youth enabled the program to establish positive social norms, which were maintained in the program with a minimum of rules and disciplinary actions. Evaluators observed few instances of misbehavior during program observations, though project instructors reported that, at times, youth were tired and distracted at the end of the school day. If a participant had a problem during program time, project instructors referred the student to Éxito's primary staff, who roamed the school hallways providing back-up support to each project group. Éxito case managers were also informed if a student acted out during the program.

These norms translated into positive peer relationships. Students described that they all "got along" in the program even when they didn't get along during the school day. One student explained:

It's completely different, right? During school, you got a beef with that person, right? Then when you get in the kitchen [culinary arts project], you be like, [politely] "Pass me the salt?"…Because, you know, in school, you gotta fight to not look [weak]. But in the program it's like, you don't have to impress.

Several students reported that Éxito helped them to make new friends and become more social in school. One student reported:

I used to be shy, like, I wouldn't talk. And, as you can see, I'm talking a lot. So being around everybody, I'm more open, like I can express myself better than in the beginning…. It just helped me make more friends.

The positive social norms of the group were particularly significant for English language learners, who reported that they felt comfortable in program activities with English-speaking students and instructors because the many bilingual students in Éxito were willing to help them when they didn't understand something. Thus, for some youth, Éxito helped to establish the social ties that are critical to keeping students from disengaging from school.

Relevant, Hands-On Activities

Éxito's attendance grew in year 2 in part because students were interested in the program's project-based learning activities and found them meaningful. The themes for the six project groups were chosen partly based on student input. Project activities varied, of course, according to project needs, but they generally included hands-on instruction and several mini-projects that built to a final group project. Students reported that the project groups were both relevant and fun; student engagement in project activities appeared consistently high during our observations, as illustrated by this excerpt from field notes of an observation of the robotics group:

Each student has a robot, a kit, and sits at the table working independently on their laptop to program the robot. Some have music playing. The instructor says he needs a demonstration of three functions: up and back, bumper system check, and radar sensor. "Do you remember how to do that?" One of the robots needs a bumper sensor added to the front of it; [the instructor] works with a student to build this additional part, using a diagram, and add it to the robot. One student demonstrates with his robot which goes forward probably about 3 yards, turns around, and stops before returning. "Oh, I should have made it more seconds," he says, and goes back to his computer.

The instructor reported that all the students we observed on this day were in the school's special education program. He believed the robotics activities presented "a higher level" of intellectual challenge than the students experienced in their classes.

Students reported that the project topics tapped into their career interests and passions and, at least in some cases, their desire for self-sufficiency. One student explained of the culinary arts project, "[I'm learning] how to cook on my own…. Say if my mom is out, or she's working or something, I can just whip something up because I know how to cook." Another student commented:

I have two [projects]. I chose storytelling because I think it's better to let your story go than to keep it in…. Everybody has stories to tell and I have one. And I just love to write. And music is my thing. Every day when I come to school I have music on. I feel like my life is going to fall apart if I don't have music.

Across the various projects, students told us that they appreciated the hands-on nature of the activities. As one student said, "You're not sitting in classes doing work or writing or boring [stuff]…. You're moving around, doing things, you know?"

Opportunities for Success

The project groups also provided opportunities for students to take risks—and experience success—in a supportive environment. For example, a student in the music group explained:

At first I didn't think I was going to do very well in drums because some music pieces were really complicated, and when I saw it being played it looked really hard, but when you break it down, it was actually really easy.

Another student had a similar experience in the graphic arts class:

I learned that if you try, you won't die. It's a little complicated drawing people in three dimensions. But if you try and put effort into it, it will turn out to look like people.

Once students learned the necessary skills, mini-projects leading up to a final group project gave them opportunities to demonstrate their skills and receive recognition. For example, the music group performed in the school. Music students described in a focus group the sense of accomplishment they experienced after their first performance:

P1: At first I was nervous, because you see all these people and you're thinking, "Oh my God, I'm going to mess up, I hope I don't mess up!" … And then it's awesome, because then you look back at it and feel like, "I got this."

P2: Same thing for me; when we had the performance I was really nervous because it was the whole ninth-grade academy, and it was my academy and I see them every day. And I thought they would laugh and stuff. But afterwards I got good feedback, and they were saying it was really good. It made me feel happy.

These experiences of recognition were important, in part, because students were receiving positive feedback from their peers in the school. Students in other Éxito activities had similar experiences. Three students in a focus group articulated it this way:

P1: [Without Éxito] I probably wouldn't have been acknowledged.

P2: I wouldn't be noticed.

P3: Yeah, like, everybody in the school knows me now, because I've been in this program. Everybody.

Being "known" and "noticed" in a large anonymous urban high school is no small accomplishment. Through Éxito, students were known for something that was both positive and respected by their peers.

Individualized Support and Monitoring

For some participants, Éxito group activities were supplemented with intensive, individualized support. During the second year, 41 students were referred to case management. The supports were structured: case managers were to meet with students, at home and at school, a minimum of four times a month for several months. However, services were also tailored to the unique needs of individual students and their families. Case managers conducted initial assessments with students and families to determine their needs and identify underlying causes of the student's difficulties. They worked with participants to set and work toward goals. Depending on the issues, case managers could connect students and family members with resources within or beyond Congreso to address health, employment, housing, or educational needs.

Case managers adopted a strengths perspective in working with students. This stance includes valuing their relationships with students, affirming students' strengths, conveying that growth and change are possible, and encouraging students to set their own goals (Arnold, Walsh, Oldham, & Rapp, 2007). In interviews, students talked about a variety of personal and academic goals they had identified with the help of their case managers. The rapport the case managers built with students emerged as a clear asset that probably worked to counteract the stigma afterschool staff reported that some students associated with case managers. Students regularly used the word *friend* to describe their case manager, saying, for example, "I don't speak with her like any other adult. I speak to her like a friend."

Case managers also monitored student progress in school, focusing particularly on attendance. They regularly checked school data on students' absences and class cuts; then they followed up with students who were missing school. Students said that this monitoring helped to increase their motivation. As one student said:

[My case manger] was always on me about that and always with me. And that's what I like most about the program…. They motivated me…. And she's always been there to help me and push me to go to school and was always there watching over me.

Another student stated, "I just need somebody to push me to do those things. So I guess the program supported me because… I just needed somebody to push me to do things."

Program Challenges

Though Éxito has shown promise in a number of areas, naturally the program faced challenges in implementing its dropout prevention model. Two notable challenges had to do with participant engagement with case managers and with building literacy and numeracy skills.

Engaging Hard-to-Reach Students in Case Management

Not all students were open to receiving case management. Case managers reported that some students were wary of the process or found it intrusive. For example, one student wanted to terminate services after his case manager shared his class-cutting record with his parents. A third of the case management students refused or lost interest in case management services before achieving their goals, although they remained in the afterschool program. These difficult-to-engage students may help to explain why case management students had higher rates of suspension and of failing English than did comparison

students (Table 1, page 23). As a group, case management students likely had higher incidence of emotional and behavioral challenges than the comparison students. This finding also suggests that students with behavioral challenges were more difficult to engage than students with attendance issues.

Providing Academic Support

Project-based learning activities and optional homework help benefitted many participants and improved the likelihood that they would pass their courses. Participants showed enthusiasm for the support they received, which included support from staff and peer tutors and access to laptops for Internet research. However, Éxito still faces challenges in directly affecting students' literacy and numeracy skills without losing their interest and engagement. Program staff noted that some students who needed help were not requesting it. For example, students who cut classes did not know they had homework. Also, project-based learning and homework help supports were not intensive enough to begin to address remedial issues. With only a quarter of eleventh-grade students in the school scoring at grade level on the state's standardized assessment in 2009–10, Éxito is continuing to develop the role it can play in improving students' academic competencies. In year 3, Éxito is drawing on college tutors and more online academic resources, including SAT prep software, to bolster students' academic skills.

Engaging and Supporting At-risk Students

Éxito played an important role in supporting many academically vulnerable students in their underperforming neighborhood high school. Though school reform efforts focused on improving the root causes of high dropout rates are essential to effect widespread improvement, this effort, led by a community-based organization (CBO), has shown promise in its impact on the trajectory of students with early signs of disengagement from school.

A comprehensive model like Éxito requires the resources that a large multi-service CBO like Congreso can bring to the table. Though other school-CBO partnerships may not have the range of resources necessary to implement the full Éxito model, they may be able to adopt some or all of the model's key components as outlined in this article. The early evaluation results from Éxito suggest that CBOs can play an important role in keeping struggling students in large urban high schools on track to graduate.

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Notes

[1] Congreso de Latinos Unidos, the 14th largest Hispanic nonprofit in the nation, has nearly 35 years of experience in meeting the myriad socio-economic challenges faced by its surrounding community, through education, employment, and health and social services. For information, go to www.congreso.net.

youth are here

Promoting Youth Spaces through Community Mapping

by Kathrin C. Walker and Rebecca N. Saito

Research demonstrates that involvement in high-quality youth programs benefits young people personally, socially, and academically (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). Yet many families—particularly low-income and minority families—are unsatisfied with the quality, affordability, and availability of options in their communities (Duffett & Johnson, 2004; Lochner, Allen, & Blyth, 2009). Participation rates are especially low for youth who come from families and communities with lower incomes (Lochner et al., 2009; Pittman, Wilson-Ahlstrom, & Yohalem, 2003; Saito, Benson, Blyth, & Sharma, 1995). In addition, growing evidence documents that rates of participation in youth development programs drop around age 12 or 13 and remain low (Farrell, 2008; Saito, 2009; Simpkins, Little, & Weiss, 2004). In many communities, opportunity gaps limit how many youth can benefit (Lochner et al., 2009; Saito, 2004). The limited number of available opportunities is one barrier to participation. Lack of awareness of pro-

grams that do exist is another persistent barrier (Saito, et al., 1995).

The Youth Action Crew (YAC) initiative in Minneapolis was designed to address these troubling gaps by identifying available youth development opportunities,

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creating maps to raise awareness of these opportunities, and defining local gaps in youth services. This community-based youth engagement project provided youth and adults with resources to identify, promote, and develop youth-friendly programs and places. This case study shows the potential of the YAC project as a model for such youth-led community mapping initiatives.

Methods

This article is based on a retrospective case study evaluation of the YAC initiative conducted in 2010 (Walker, 2011). It draws on an earlier formative evaluation conducted in 2006, which included four focus groups with YAC youth participants and crew leaders (Harris, Valrose, Martin, & Ishizaki, 2007). The purpose of the evaluation was to describe the YAC process, document its development and implementation, and summarize the accomplishments and impact of the YAC projects. Further, the evaluation presented lessons learned and recommendations to inform and guide future YAC initiatives and related efforts (Walker, 2011). The four key question areas of the evaluation were:

- **Background.** What are the YAC initiative's history, purpose, and framework?
- **Contributions.** What have the YAC projects contributed or accomplished? What was the initiative's impact?
- **Challenges.** What challenges have surfaced for YAC projects? What are the main barriers or limitations?
- **Implications.** What are the implications and future directions for work in this area? What is the potential of the YAC approach?

To address these evaluation questions, the evaluation included two methodological strands:

- **Document review.** A review of documents—reports, evaluations, presentations, program materials, training curricula, products, and others—provided a descriptive account of the history of YAC, the structure of the intervention, the various projects, and the resulting outcomes and impacts.
- **Stakeholder interviews.** Key stakeholders involved in the development, training, and delivery of YAC, as well as a selection of funders and crew leaders, were interviewed to capture issues, contributions, and challenges.

About the Youth Action Crew Initiative

YAC is a youth-led research, mapping, marketing, and community development initiative. Teams or "crews" of young people and the adults who support them canvass their neighborhood and interview youth and adult community members, create maps of youth-friendly places, and distribute the maps to parents and youth in order to promote youth participation in out-of-school time activities. Some YACs work further to promote the development of opportunities and resources to better serve the community's youth and families.

History

Asset-based community development has a long history. In Minneapolis, a number of events and activities served as key precursors to the YAC initiative. For example, Search Institute's study of youth development opportunities for youth ages 7–14 in Minneapolis found that roughly half of young people did not participate in youth development programs, largely because they did not know what was available or did not have access to transportation (Saito et al., 1995).

The YAC initiative began as a pilot project to address the fact that youth often do not know what is available in their community. Rebecca Saito and Delroy Calhoun, as part of their work with the University of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development, created and piloted YAC in their own Minneapolis neighborhood in the summer of 2005. With new funding, three more Minneapolis neighborhoods embarked on YAC projects in 2006; seven additional neighborhoods were targeted in 2007.

One of the three projects begun in 2006, the Camden Youth Engagement Project, took the YAC model beyond research, mapping, and community awareness to include youth advocacy for additional community resources. This expanded version of the YAC came to be known as Community Youth Action Crew. Based on Camden's success, YAC projects expanded to include inner suburbs. The project has since expanded to include the first countywide YAC.

Purposes

The goals of YAC projects are to:

- Increase awareness of youth-oriented services and opportunities

> Roughly half of young people did not participate in youth development programs, largely because they did not know what was available or did not have access to transportation.

- Create and disseminate marketing information about youth-friendly spaces
- Mobilize communities to promote youth-friendly programs and places

The aim, in other words, is to find out what is happening locally that is good for young people and to help more youth get involved in those activities, promoting the development of more options when possible.

Framework

The YAC model engages youth in research, community mapping, social marketing, and community development. It both informed and was informed by Saito and Sullivan's Rings of Engagement conceptual model (Sullivan, 2011), shown in Figure 1. The model differentiates four uses of the term *youth engagement*: participation, passion, voice, and collective leadership. For some, the focus of youth engagement is ensuring that young people *participate* in high-quality programs. Others think about youth engagement in terms of helping young people find things they are *passionate* about. Another notion of youth engagement emphasizes the value of *voice* and input—of youth having a say in matters that affect them. Finally, a hallmark of *collective leadership* can be seen when youth and adults share decision-making power and authority. The YAC model attends to all four understandings of the concept of youth engagement.

YAC is a process rather than a program. The YAC curriculum (Saito, McBride, Griffin-Wiesner, & Gilgen, 2009) is flexible so as to be adapted to each community that uses it. However, a set of guiding principles underpin the approach. The YAC model is a youth-adult partnership that consists of:
- A crew of young people, ages 13–17
- An adult crew leader or team of leaders who mentor and supervise the crew
- A planning team that offers support, oversight, and guidance to the project as a whole

The crew members should be very familiar with the community to be mapped: they live, work, or go to school in the neighborhood. The model encourages providing stipends and transportation, as well as food, for all YAC meetings and trainings. Crew leaders should be adults in the community who have a history of effectively engaging young people and sharing power and authority with them. The planning team advises the crew leader and helps represent the project in the community.

The curriculum takes crews through a process that unfolds in a 10-week or 10-month period. The 10-week model consists of Phases 1–3, described below. The expanded 10-month model, Community Youth Action Crew (CYAC), focuses on Phase 4.

Phase 1: Youth as Researchers

Grounded in participatory and action research, YAC involves participants in inquiry with the aim of producing

Figure 1. Rings of Engagement
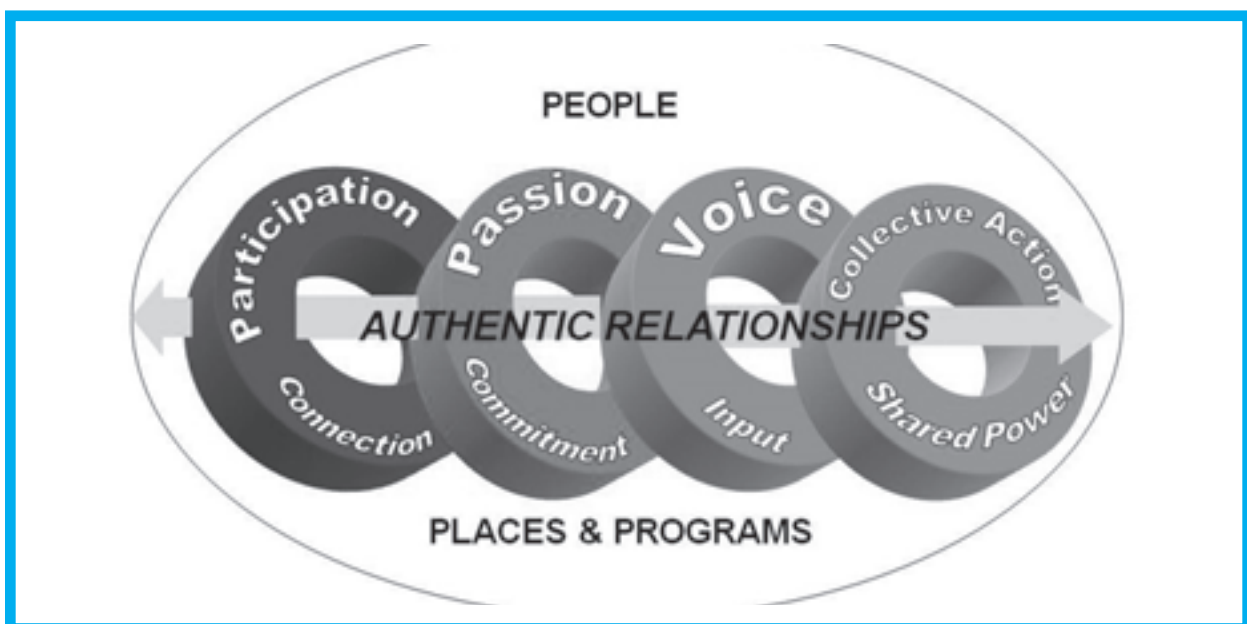
useful knowledge and action for social change. In Phase 1, young people gather and analyze data on the existence of youth-friendly opportunities and on public awareness of these opportunities. Youth interview young people, employers, youth program providers, and other adults to learn about community awareness of programs, youth participation, youth interests, and perceived barriers to participation. Crews also search out existing databases and other sources of information about programs and resources for youth.

Phase 2: Map Making

Community asset mapping is a data collection and communication process that has been promoted as a means of involving youth in participatory action research (Amsden & VanWynsberghe, 2005). This strategy involves describing the current situation or environment, identifying gaps, and envisioning a better future.

In Phase 2, youth design and market a community map of youth-friendly spaces. Figure 2 shows the YAC map of the Whittier neighborhood of south Minneapolis. This first crew identified 21 youth-serving programs in their small neighborhood, 10 blocks square. However, almost none of the neighborhood youth the crew interviewed knew about these programs. Addressing this lack of knowledge is the next step in Phase 2. Youth give youth-friendly places a sign that says, "You<th Are Here" (Figure 3) as part of a marketing campaign designed to increase awareness of youth-friendly spaces among youth and families and, in turn, to encourage participation.

Figure 2. Whittier Poster

Phase 3: Marketing

The marketing phase involves getting the maps into the hands of young people and parents; calling attention to the data and the You<th Are Here signs and explaining what they mean; and speaking at community meetings, as the Whittier YAC did in 2005 when crew members spoke to a packed house of over 100 neighbors who had gathered to hear a city council candidate.

Phase 4: Community Development

In Phase 4, youth bring attention to unmet needs for programming for neighborhood youth and the barriers that keep youth from participating in existing programs. They then promote the development of appropriate resources to better serve youth and families. Youth mobilize adults

ment of the *Champions for Youth Call to Action*, an action plan targeting six strategic goals to increase [involvement and a stronger youth voice in the community. The Brooklyns Youth Council, comprising youth from Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center, was established to serve as an advisory, planning, and communicating body in partnership with the Brooklyn Bridge Alliance for Youth and each city's adult coalition. Opportunities for youth in the Brooklyns have increased. A new youth center opened in 2009, staffed in part by former crew members. Youth also updated the online map and designed marketing tools, such as rave cards, for the new center.

Figure 3

to transform neighborhood services and allocate resources to better meet the needs of young people. Phase 4 is the hallmark of the CYAC model.

YAC at Work
The work of five crews illustrates the development and potential of the YAC model.

Camden Youth Engagement Project
In 2006, a newly-formed collaborative—the Youth Engagement Project (YEP)—agreed to apply the first two phases of the YAC model in the Camden community of North Minneapolis. The YEP crew identified community assets and produced and marketed maps showing youth-friendly places in the neighborhood. This was the first crew to design "pocket maps" that fit in a pocket or purse. Ironically, the Camden neighborhood had thousands of young people and no afterschool or evening programs for teens. This fact spurred YEP to expand on the YAC model to include Phase 4, the community development piece, to work on filling gaps in youth services. YEP transitioned from a project to a program that continues to promote and produce activities for young people.

Brooklyn Park Community Youth Action Crew
In 2008, 20 Brooklyn Park youth participated in a CYAC project. Of the 1,000 youth interviewed, 75 percent did not participate in any kind of youth program. The most frequently cited reason was "don't know what's available." Crew members shared these findings with community leaders at a series of summits which led to the develop-

Richfield and Bloomington Youth Action Crews
Bloomington Public Health sponsored the Richfield Youth Action Crew. Of the 290 youth surveyed, nearly a third had never participated in youth programs and nearly half of those did not know what was available. The crew's map raised awareness of existing opportunities. In addition, the Richfield YAC, having identified a need to address how youth were perceived in the community, created a video called *See Us, Hear Us, Engage Us,* which they shared with community groups including the city council and school board.

The Richfield model was then replicated and adapted in the neighboring city of Bloomington. Richfield YAC youth trained Bloomington YAC youth in interviewing and presentation skills. The Bloomington YAC had more time and a broader focus, adding a component on making healthy choices and survey questions about whether youth had caring adults in their lives. The crew surveyed 570 youth, 52 businesses, and 22 organizations. At the time of the 2010 evaluation, members of the Richfield YAC were working on PSAs and other outreach and social marketing efforts.

Carver County
More than 25 middle and high school students from across Carver County gathered for the first county-wide

CYAC, sponsored by the Carver County Health Partnership. In the course of four months, Carver County's five teams conducted interviews with over 1,600 youth and about 100 interviews with community members throughout the county. These data informed the creation of a county-wide map. The Carver County CYAC is incorporating both suburban and rural youth experiences; the two vary widely in terms of resources, programs, activities, and access to [transportation. The University of Minnesota Extension's Youth Work Institute is integrating the Carver County Health Partnership's findings and recommendations to help create a replicable model for other counties.

YAC's Impact

As the YAC initiative has evolved, it has had several significant successes and contributed to others. Just as YAC did not develop in isolation from preceding efforts, so YAC and its offshoots have had a ripple effect on other efforts. The main areas in which YAC has had an impact are:

- Community awareness
- Community development
- Youth development
- Adult development
- Training development

Community Awareness

Across all years and locations, YAC projects consistently identified the fact that youth did not know about available opportunities as the largest barrier to participation. YAC projects used maps of programs and youth-friendly places in their marketing efforts to raise awareness of opportunities for young people, particularly teens. In neighborhoods that had a lot of opportunities, YAC projects raised awareness of existing youth programs. In opportunity-depleted communities, YAC projects raised awareness of the need.
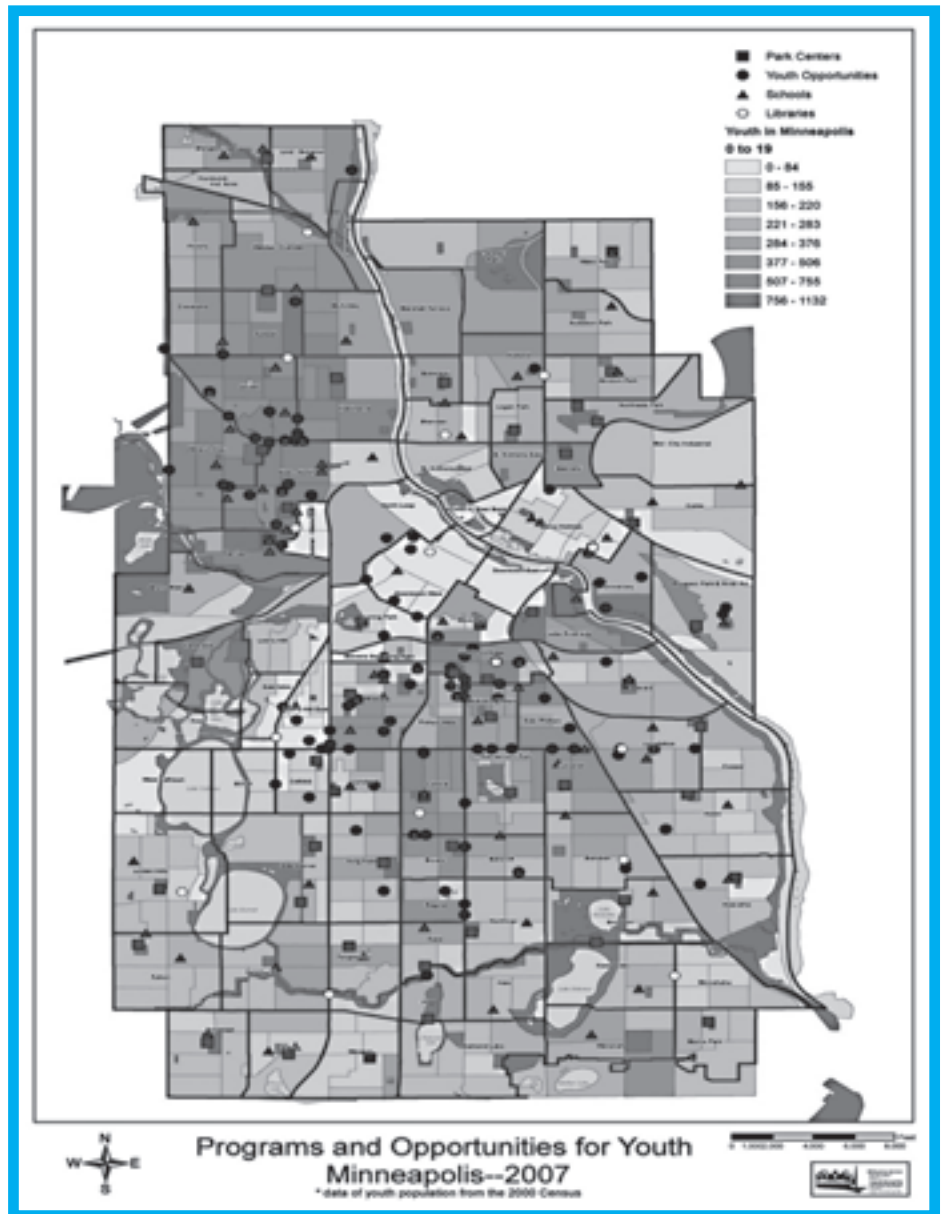
Figure 4. Citywide Map

Maps

YAC neighborhood maps have proven to be a useful source of information for youth, parents, and policymakers. One community leader described in an interview how the maps "generate buzz" in the community, raise awareness of the importance of youth-friendly spaces, and put youth "on the radar." In 2007, YAC crews identified over 350 youth programs in Minneapolis. These data were used to create a citywide map of Programs and Opportunities for Youth (Figure 4) that not only identified where programs were located but also showed which Minneapolis neighborhoods had the highest percentages of children and youth, as indicated by darker colors. Some parts of the city with the largest proportions of children and youth had few if any youth programs. This map powerfully illustrated the

the inaugural year, during a 10-week period in 2007, 5,199 North Minneapolis youth and 1,409 South Minneapolis youth rode the buses. The North Minneapolis You<th Are Here bus route continues to this day, a concrete and sustained outcome of the YAC project. Similarly, the Brooklyns Youth Council raised funds to purchase a van to help address the transportation barrier.

Program Development

With ongoing adult support, youth commitment, and additional funding, the Camden crew extended the original YAC model by continuing to employ a youth crew to plan and organize activities for youth in their community. A new fiscal agent and a new collaborative project of several neighborhood associations was established to develop a strategic plan, give additional support, and provide funding to sustain efforts. This evolution from project to program is a testament to Camden's sustained commitment to youth engagement.

Investments in Youth

After the Brooklyn Park crew identified a lack of opportunities, a local youth development organization developed an action plan targeting six strategic goals to increase youth involvement and build a stronger youth voice in the community. The crew's work and the action plan contributed to the creation of new youth-friendly spaces in the Brooklyns. Stakeholders reported in interviews that Brooklyn Park tripled the funds invested in young people. A new funding stream for engaging older youth has funded several YACs.

Youth Development

While all stakeholders prioritized community development as the primary purpose of YAC, they also recognized the powerful im-

gaps between where youth lived and where youth development opportunities existed.

Marketing

The You<th Are Here sign is a recognizable marketing tool. An evaluation of one project began to assess the impact of the marketing strategy. Intercept interviews conducted in public settings with area residents found that over half (57 percent, n = 23) were aware of the neighborhood map of youth assets (Hennepin County's Research, Planning and Development Department, 2008).

Community Development

In response to the availability and awareness gaps, stakeholders have launched a variety of efforts to better meet the needs, address the barriers, and promote more youth-friendly spaces.

Transportation

Lack of safe and reliable transportation is a major barrier preventing youth from participating in youth programs. This was especially true in Camden, where thousands of teens had no access to programs and activities in the evenings and on weekends. To address this barrier, the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board created two You^th Are Here bus routes serving North and South Minneapolis. The buses, which carried a youth worker onboard, provided free transportation to parks, libraries, and other youth programs. According to a summary of

pact participation has on young people themselves. YAC participants valued the opportunity to get involved and better the community (Harris et al., 2007). When youth are involved as change agents, they gain important skills and competencies.

Youth Employment

The YAC initiative is a youth employment opportunity; youth are paid a stipend for fulfilling their commitment to the project, which includes participating in meetings, trainings, and activities. As a youth employment model, YAC helps young people develop 21st century leadership skills with real-world applications, including initiative, responsibility, teamwork, and public speaking. Numerous stakeholders underscored the significance of the fact that the project was an employment opportunity that recognized the contributions of young people (Walker, 2011).

Youth Engagement

The YAC initiative is based on a model of youth engagement characterized by participation, passion, voice, and collective leadership (Sullivan, 2011). Participation in YAC touched on all these dimensions. It provided a vehicle for young people to participate in a semi-formal youth program, to explore new skills and passions, and to use their voices to make a meaningful difference in influencing their communities. In many cases the crews served as advisors to inform decisions and policies.

Adult Development

Another outcome of YAC was its impact on adults and on how they perceived young people. Data collected by and from youth proved to be powerful tools when youth sought to inform community leaders and help policymakers make strategic decisions. As one stakeholder put it in an interview, "It's harder for adults to say 'no' when young people present quality data." Minneapolis crews presented their findings to city leaders such as the mayor, police chief, and superintendent at two citywide town hall forums. Similarly, stakeholders described how powerful it was when the Brooklyn Park crew shared its findings with community leaders at a series of summits. One stakeholder said in an interview that the YAC initiative helped to change the culture of the city of Minneapolis and "how we do business with and for young people."

Training Development

Based on lessons learned from the Minneapolis YACs as well as the subsequent CYACs that took the model even

further, a Youth Action Crew Toolkit and training were developed by the University of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development's Youth Work Institute. Future plans include providing training to other groups interested in conducting YAC projects.

Lessons Learned

In addition to these notable contributions, the YAC model also faced challenges. The lessons learned from these challenges can help to inform future work in this area.

Selecting and Supporting Crew Leaders

YAC is a time-intensive process that requires a commitment of dedicated staff time. Getting the right adults in place to effectively serve as crew leaders posed a challenge. In some cases, the project's responsibilities were added to already full plates, so that staff were less committed than crews needed them to be. In other cases, staff members who lacked a strong youth development orientation were not a good fit.

It is essential to hire the right people. As a stakeholder noted in an interview, "A great crew leader is the glue." Characteristics of a great crew leader include those of a strong youth worker: strong relationship skills, critical thinking abilities, and a solid community and youth development orientation. Further, staff need to be paid for time dedicated to the role of crew leader. Finally, to incorporate reflection and early identification of issues, we recommend that sites use monthly process reports, as the Minneapolis CYACs did. In addition to enhancing project quality, such reports generate information staff can use to update supervisors and showcase their efforts.

Selecting and Employing Crew Members

Youth crew members should be interviewed and selected as for any other job. Having young people take the initiative to seek out and apply for this opportunity appears to increase their accountability. Further, hiring youth who are from the community is key to increasing and sustaining their investment. Finally, crews should include a mix of involved youth who know what's available in the community and uninvolved youth who know how to reach other disengaged youth.

Collecting and Using Data

Young people provide important "key informant" perspectives on their communities and the programs that serve them. Involving youth thus contributes to the collection of comprehensive and useful data. Further, young

people are experts when it comes to knowing where young people who aren't engaged in youth programs hang out; they thus can collect data from such uninvolved youth and later give them maps. Some YACs found that crew members can see results quickly and interact with the data more easily if they use such online data tools as SurveyMonkey.

While the maps provide a useful snapshot of community-level information, the data have limitations. Some communities put their maps online and update them, while other communities' maps quickly grow out of date. Further, though some core questions were asked across all communities, aggregating the data across communities is problematic since each crew used different processes and criteria for including youth-friendly opportunities on their maps. The maps and data serve as a valuable local resource to raise awareness and educate people, but the data cannot be used over time or across communities. Exploration is underway to determine the feasibility of building a Google Maps application that would enable young people to use their cell phones to look up information on youth programs.

Building the Planning Team and Engaging Community Partners

Adult readiness is often the biggest obstacle to success for YACs. Adults need to be ready to be receptive to and to act upon the data. One stakeholder said that adults in the community showed "polite interest," but no community champions stepped up to take action on the identified need for a "hang-out spot" for teens.

Several stakeholders stressed the importance of having the right community partners on board. In the most successful instances, the planning team that initially established funding for the community mapping project continued to work together and sought additional funding to continue to plan and facilitate activities for youth.

YACs Past and Future

Without the YAC initiative, stakeholders repeatedly stressed, the landscape for Minneapolis youth would be different. YAC projects and related efforts raised community awareness of youth opportunities and contributed to the development of greater access to and support for such programs. The youth involved gained important

> YAC projects and related efforts raised community awareness of youth opportunities and contributed to the development of greater access to and support for such programs.

leadership skills as they worked toward making a meaningful difference in their communities. Adult community leaders were affected by and moved to act on the findings of many YAC projects. Lessons from the various iterations of the project led to the development of a Youth Action Crew Toolkit, which can support the dissemination of this community and youth engagement service-learning project.

Future research is needed to develop a deeper understanding of the contextual, demographic, and community variables that affect the likelihood that older youth from lower-income communities will participate in youth development programs and opportunities.

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a place for the arts

Lessons Learned from an Afterschool Art Experience with Reclaimed Materials

by Angela Eckhoff, Amy Hallenbeck, and Mindy Spearman

Afterschool programs are becoming an increasingly important part of many elementary students' educational experience. Though individual afterschool programs vary, arts experiences are often a part of the curriculum. Historically, craft-related activities such as woodworking, carpentry, basket weaving, beadwork, clay work, and drawing were often included in post-World War II afterschool programs (Halpern, 2002). More recently, the visual arts have served an integral role in successful afterschool programs serving homeless children (Shepard & Booth, 2009), students with special needs (Schwartz & Pace, 2008), and struggling readers (Bryan, Owens, & Walker, 2004). Visual arts projects in afterschool environments have included such diverse experiences as comic book illustration (Khurana, 2005), painting murals on a school cafeteria wall (Merrill, 2008), and embellishing a life-size pickup truck with art inspired by Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* (Wheeler, 2001). As Andrews (2001) notes, "the arts are flourishing out of school—and the way in which participation can enhance achievement across the curriculum as well as giving children a sense of belonging to the school and to the community is very powerful" (p. 71).

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We conducted action research in a school-based afterschool setting to explore how a meaningful arts experience could be integrated into a program that did not include an arts-focused curriculum. Unencumbered by restrictions surrounding formal classrooms, afterschool programs can offer exploratory art activities that support young learners' artistic creation, arts viewing, and aesthetic experiences. Though challenges emerge in designing and implementing arts experiences in programs that do not already include arts components, children can benefit from inclusion of visual arts experience in general-focus afterschool programs.

Perspectives

Though the arts are increasingly included in afterschool programs, the content of arts activities and students' roles in those activities can vary widely. What constitutes meaningful, high-quality arts experience in afterschool settings that are not explicitly designed as arts-focused programs? In its 2008 advocacy statement *Visual Arts in After School Programs,* the National Art Education Association (NAEA) presents 21 best practices for incorporating meaningful, high-quality visual arts experiences in afterschool environments. The recommendations center on the key ideas of student choice, supportive instruction, exploration, and meaning making. The NAEA encourages afterschool visual arts programs to allow students to make choices about the content of their work, their materials, and their processes. It also recommends that afterschool arts instruction provide opportunities for self-expression, thoughtful solutions to challenges, and exploration of novel ideas. The recommendations highlight the importance of hands-on and "minds-on" experiences as well as the need for staff to understand arts-related content and pedagogical practice (NAEA, 2008).

The NAEA recommendations guided us in developing this project on arts learning with reclaimed materials. Creating original and inventive artworks from what once were objects of waste gives students unique opportunities to connect ordinary discarded objects with their own artistic creations (Eckhoff & Spearman, 2009). Fostering the creation of art using reclaimed materials may help to develop a learning environment rich with challenging, expressive visual arts experiences.

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We focused in this project on reclaimed materials and found objects for both practical and pedagogical reasons. Practically, the use of reclaimed materials was important because the afterschool program did not have a budget for arts materials. Pedagogically, the use of reclaimed materials provided students with an arts experience combining the novel with the familiar. We hypothesized that the novelty of working with found objects would prompt student interest while the familiarity of the materials and of the process of creating art would tap students' prior knowledge and experience. Both interest and prior knowledge are important components of supportive informal learning. In addition, reconceptualizing the meaning and purpose of reclaimed objects required students to think creatively. Arts education scholars assert that the complexity of the visual arts provides a powerful means of engaging students in critical and creative thinking (Efland, 2002; Eisner, 2002; Perkins, 1994).

The reclaimed materials also challenged students to construct three-dimensional works. The limited body of research on children's three-dimensional artistic endeavors (Golomb, 2004; Golomb & McCormick, 1995; Pavlou, 2009) indicates that young learners readily engage in such work and attend to the representational issues inherent in three-dimensional art, such as form, uprightness, balance, stability, complexity, and movement. The rich experience of creating with reclaimed materials allowed us to examine the possibilities of multifaceted arts exploration in an afterschool environment.

Methodology

This research explored the possibilities of introducing a visual arts experience in an established afterschool program. Our vision for the project was twofold: We aimed to explore not only how students' experiences reflected the NAEA recommendations for arts learning but also which aspects of the afterschool program challenged or supported the success of a non-outcomes-based art endeavor.

Two research questions are explored in this article:
- What programmatic challenges and affordances manifested themselves in a multi-day afterschool art project?
- In what ways did project components related to engagement, content, and learning environment contribute to the student experience?

Research Setting and Participants

The afterschool program in which we conducted this action research is a 21st Century Community Learning Centers organization with a mission to serve at-risk students by providing homework support, tutoring and academic assistance, and non-academic enrichment programs. Located in a small rural community in the southeastern U.S., the program's Title I school serves fewer than 200 pre-kindergarten through fifth-grade students. Afterschool program attendance is voluntary. During a typical afternoon, students first receive a snack and complete homework assignments. Then they participate in activities designed to support the academic components being covered in their classrooms: academically oriented games, supplemental lessons, computer-assisted instruction, tutoring, and extended group practice and discussion. Before our project, students' afterschool visual art experiences included free time to draw or color, occasional teacher-planned craft projects, and assemblage of pre-packaged, theme-related craft kits. Thirty-nine students in grades 1–5 participated in the reclaimed materials project. Our discussion highlights findings from 13 students who participated in the entire project.

Nine afterschool teachers or teacher assistants were involved with the reclaimed materials project on at least one of its three days. Before work with students began, the project team led a 20-minute training session with these nine adults. The training explained the project and encouraged the teaching staff to support rather than direct students as they planned and created their artworks.

The project was blended into the existing program structure during three consecutive sessions. Students thus were working on their reclaimed materials art projects with their regular cohort of teachers and children. In the first session, students worked in small groups to explore images of found object art that uses materials similar to those available to the students. The images included Shari Elf's *Flower Power* (2008), Sarah Klockars-Clauser's *Strawberry Confusion* (2009), and *Pink Spoon Flower* (2009) by Tricia Courtney and Mary Larson of Lemon Oak Studio. In the second session, students surveyed the available materials and planned their projects. In the third session, students created artwork based on their previously developed plans.

Reclaimed Materials

Though generally artists working with found objects gather their own materials, we took on this task as project investigators because both time for the project and storage space for materials were limited. Our work was inspired by the renowned REMIDA center of Reggio Emilia, Italy. The REMIDA center supplies discarded materials to local schools and groups interested in reinventing the materials and giving them a new life. Using a REMIDA list of reclaimed materials (Reggio Children, 2005), we collected items from recycling centers, freecycle groups, and local businesses. We collected 21 kinds of manufactured or utilitarian items, including plastics, glass, textiles, metal, paper, and ceramics, for students to use in creating their artworks.

Analysis

Our study draws on four main sources of qualitative data: transcripts of audio recordings of whole-group and planning sessions, transcripts of student interviews, student project plans, and photo documentation of student work. Semi-structured student interviews, introduced through informal conversations, prompted students to talk about the materials they chose for their artwork and about the previous and current functions of those materials.

We began the process of data analysis with narrative data from student interviews and whole-group sessions. We carefully read each transcript and recorded our views related to the research questions, thereby creating an initial coding system. We then identified portions of the transcripts that dealt with student engagement, project content, and the afterschool learning environment. We refined our initial coding system through an iterative pattern of observation and analysis. The coding system included codes for materials used in student project plans and artworks, student use of functional or representational materials, student definitions of recycled materials, themes evident in students' artworks, and students' creative and constructive procedures. We then triangulated image data—photos of student project plans and artwork—with the findings of the narrative data analysis. Three investigators coded all data; differences were discussed until the raters achieved 100 percent agreement.

Engaging Children in Found Object Art

Our qualitative data enabled us to develop rich descriptive accounts of the interactions among students, afterschool and project staff, reclaimed materials, and the artworks students constructed during the three-day project. Through iterative cycles of analysis and evaluation, we not only examined how the project related to students' art experiences but also uncovered some of the benefits and difficulties of fostering artistic creation in afterschool settings.

Two Students Engaged in Making Art

Two of the students who attended all three days of the project illustrate the ways in which students engaged with reclaimed materials to make art.

Caden, a fourth-grader, decided early in his planning session that he wanted to make a three-dimensional car using a candy tin as the body. He chose the candy tin "because it was one of the closest things that I could find shaped like a car." Caden's plan (Figure 1) clearly identifies his material choices and desire to "make the car stand up." Caden described his work:

> It's a car and I used these [washers] as wheels and the mirror. I wanted to make them stay and I used the hot glue so that I could make everything stay 'cause it didn't exactly work with the other glue. I also put these . . . metal pieces on the front and the back so they're like bumpers.

As Caden's description and final artwork (Figure 2) illustrate, Caden was trying to replicate the appearance of a car using materials that resembled car parts. When he worked to make his two-dimensional plan into a three-dimensional piece, Caden encountered the challenge of constructing the car so it could support its own weight. He tried unsuccessfully to attach the metal washers he wanted to use as wheels to the candy tin with an epoxy. Then he sought assistance from a teacher, who suggested hot glue. As Caden described the process, "I had a few pieces but it was still hard."

Another student, Greyson, a second-grader, experienced different challenges when constructing her three-dimensional artwork from her two-dimensional plan. Greyson's plan (Figure 3) was a mix of planning with materials and a cartoon-like sketch of a girl dressed in a shirt and skirt. Unlike Caden's plan, Greyson's plan did not clearly show an intention to develop a three-dimensional work.

However, this intention became evident as Greyson worked. When asked whether her piece was going to be flat or stand up, Greyson replied, "I maybe wanted it to be tall." As she held the blue fabric she had selected for the shirt, she said, "I'm not sure what to do with this." Expressing her desire to work in three dimensions, she went on, "Because I have to make the top of it. And that's just the point." Greyson built a structure of two small cardboard boxes that she stacked one on top of the other, and then she covered each box in a different fabric. The final piece (Figure 4) bears little resemblance to the sketch Greyson developed in the planning phase.
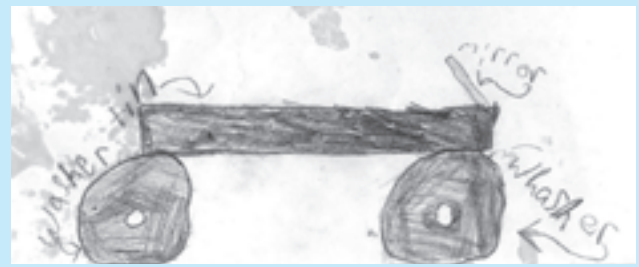
Figure 1. Caden's Plan
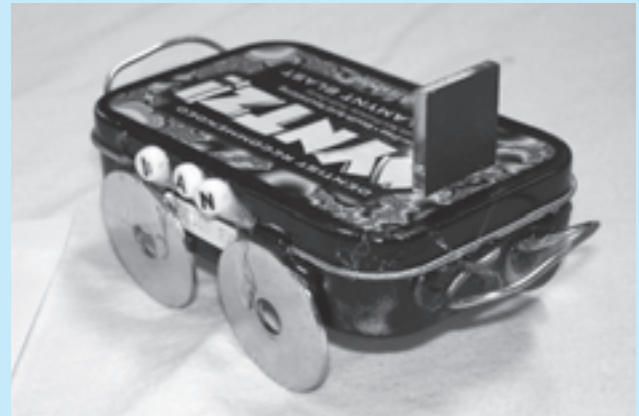
Figure 2. Caden's Artwork

Figure 3. Greyson's Plan

Figure 4. Greyson's Artwork

However, Greyson turned her two-dimensional sketch into a three-dimensional work that attended to complex representational issues and could be appreciated from a variety of perspectives.

Student Engagement in Meaning Making

Greyson's and Caden's processes and final artworks illustrate many of the challenges and successes students experienced as they explored materials and planned and constructed their artworks. Working with reclaimed materials posed challenges to which students developed their own solutions. Without the need to make a grade or meet a requirement, they could develop the creative resourcefulness and confidence that more highly structured arts activities might not afford. From responding to object-centered questions to creating with objects they freely chose, children had opportunities to expand their understandings of reclaimed materials and to think through unanticipated challenges, showing what Eisner describes as "…the ability and a willingness to surrender to the unanticipated possibilities of the work as it unfolds" (Eisner, 2002).

As Caden's choice and subsequent use of the candy tin demonstrates, students were cognitively and personally engaged in decisions to use and modify materials. On the day students constructed their artworks, two project investigators conducted informal semi-structured interviews in an effort to gain insight into each student's understanding of reclaimed materials and assemblage art. In these brief interviews, students offered detailed explanations of their choices of reclaimed materials and explanations of the objects' past and current functions. Students' engagement was both personally meaningful and thoughtful; they chose a given material for its unique perceived affordances, as in Caden's choice to use the candy tin because its shape resembled that of a car.

The planning and construction phases were iterative; students often decided to modify their initial material choices as they learned about the materials through experiencing them. The way Greyson translated her project plan into reality illustrates the evolving nature of students' work. Analysis of student project plans and final artworks indicated that the planning session helped the students to think about working with reclaimed materials to create their own pieces. The majority of students successfully developed a project plan that they realized—often with modification—in their final artwork.

The open-ended nature of the assignment and the opportunity to work in three dimensions often required students to attend to representational issues such as up-rightness, balance, stability, and complexity. Though not all these issues were relevant to every piece, complexity—the number and arrangement of different elements—was integral to each student's work. The median number of reclaimed materials in the students' final artworks was seven, as compared to a median number of four materials in the students' plans. Greyson's plan identifies two materials while her completed artwork is composed of seven different materials. This difference indicates that actually manipulating objects in the construction process created situations in which students realized the need to modify original plans to create a desired effect. In addition, nine out of the thirteen students modified one or more objects in their final artworks by altering size, color, or shape, though only four students had initially planned such modification. Students who did not modify objects were using their reclaimed materials to create decorative collages.

Practicalities of Creating a Supportive Arts Learning Environment

Analysis of transcripts of the planning and creation sessions enabled us to explore some of the practical challenges of implementing a multi-day art project in an afterschool program. One important programmatic issue was the role of non-art staff in the art project.

Before the project began, we presented a 20-minute training session for afterschool teaching staff that explained the project and briefly covered the teachers' role during planning and creation sessions. We advocated for a "guided-exploration orientation" (Bresler, 1993) that would encourage students to work as individuals; to learn to observe, listen, and communicate their sensitivities through artistic expression; and, most importantly, to consider the aesthetic qualities in arts. We chose this approach not only because it would support student exploration with found objects but also because it echoed NAEA's recommendations for afterschool arts learning (NAEA, 2008). However, analysis of the group session transcript revealed that program staff faced challenges in working with students during the construction phase. When we saw program staff directing student work, we intervened to remind both staff member and student of the importance of student choice. In these cases, the staff appeared to be focused on the final product rather than on supporting student exploration and expressive creativity. The example of Keira and Ms. Newman illustrates this challenge.

Keira, a first-grade student, did not attend the afterschool program during the first two days of the project,

so she had not engaged in the exploration or planning sessions. On the third day of the project, Keira faced the challenge of deciding in one session which materials to use and how to use them. A project investigator talked briefly with Keira before the session, encouraging her to complete as much as she felt comfortable doing and to ask for help whenever she needed it. The project staff member suggested that Keira draw on paper as means to begin thinking through the possibilities. Keira sat quietly at a table with a blank sheet of paper for several minutes, drawing the attention of one of the regular afterschool teachers, Ms. Newman. Ms. Newman began to speak with Keira about her ideas and the materials available for use. Keira had not established an idea or expressed a willingness to choose materials; she was merely looking over the reclaimed materials and watching the other students as they began to construct their artworks. Ms. Newman gently explained to Keira that time was "running out" and that she needed to get to work on her project. She suggested that Keira make a gift for her mother, showing Keira a tin container that was pretty and could be easily decorated. As the two collected materials, Ms. Newman picked out letter beads for Keira to use that spelled "LOVE U" and suggested attaching a red bow to the lid of the tin to make the gift "beautiful."

Figure 5. Keira's Work

Though Ms. Newman was successful in helping Keira finish a project in a brief time, Keira's tin (Figure 5) shows little personal expression, and her experience with the materials differed widely from that of Caden or Greyson. Rather than using the recommended guided-exploration approach, Ms. Newman aimed to help Keira create something that could be labeled "beautiful" and was appropriate as a gift. The interactions between Ms. Newman and Keira, and between them and the reclaimed materials, highlight the challenges of allowing students to develop a unique, personal creation while working with expressive media.

Lessons Learned: A Look toward the Future

This research sought to explore the possibilities of introducing a visual arts experience into the existing framework of an established afterschool program. Our findings indicate that students were engaged, interested, and appropriately challenged throughout all phases of the project. For these afterschool students, work in visual art focused on the processes of exploration, experimentation, and personal expression. The structure of the project, which included time for exploration and planning, appeared to reflect NAEA recommendations. In addition, our work highlights possibilities for strengthening future explorations by dealing with inconsistent student attendance in afterschool settings, expanding training for afterschool staff, and recruiting community artists.

We planned the art project for three consecutive days so students would have opportunities to revisit their questions, explore recurring issues, and build on personal successes as they sought to realize their ideas in a three-dimensional work. Certainly an important benefit of afterschool arts programming lies in the opportunity to work without the time limitations of the weekly art education generally offered in school. However, variable student attendance is a consistent problem for afterschool programs (Apsler, 2009; Beckett et al., 2009; Hartry, Fitzgerald, & Porter, 2008). In our study, only 33 percent of program participants attended the three
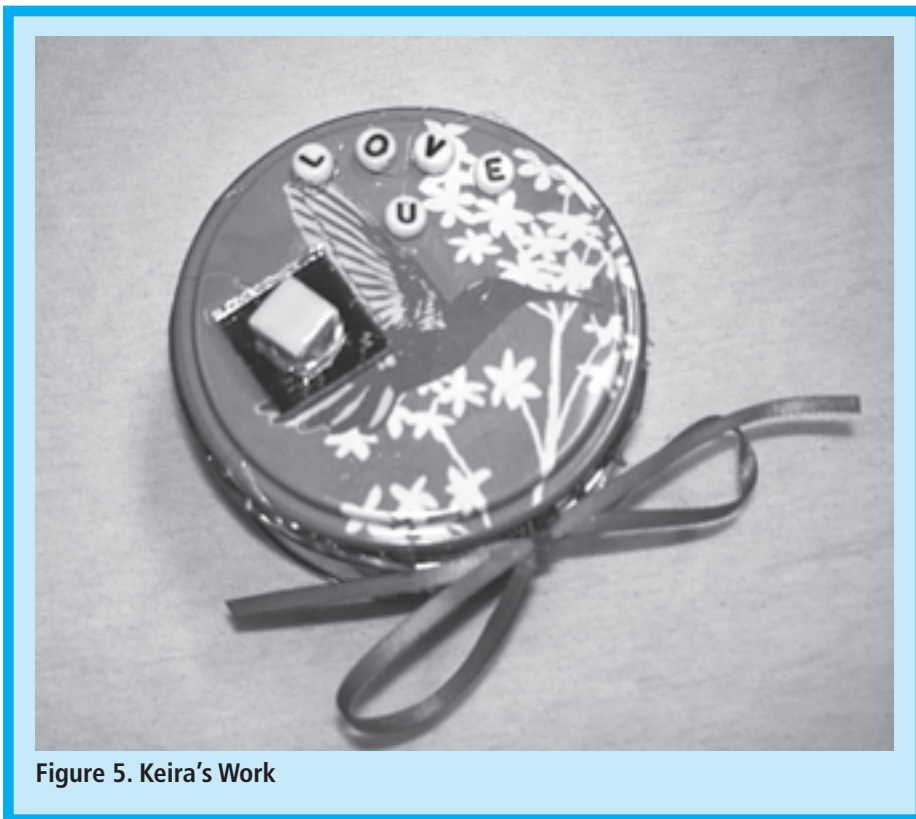
consecutive days of the project. Arts project leaders might anticipate inconsistent student attendance as they plan so they can develop arts experiences that allow students to be successful at their own pace.

This study also demonstrates the need for content- and pedagogy-driven professional development to support long-term art explorations in afterschool settings. Bresler (1993) notes that a guided-exploration approach requires significant planning on the teacher's part as well as attentiveness and active engagement on the students' part. Analysis of session transcripts led us to conclude that the brief training session we conducted did not provide program staff with the level of scaffolding they needed to be successful facilitators. Though the training introduced the project as a whole, it did not adequately emphasize the primary importance of allowing the students to drive the process of creation, as the example of Keira and Ms. Newman illustrates. The goal of Keira's experience was defined by Ms. Newman rather than by the student artist. Arts-related professional development for afterschool staff must focus on the NAEA's (2008) recommendations advocating respect for children's abilities to create their own artworks, free from adult direction.

When leading or teaching children engaged in creating art the instructors should encourage self expression, thoughtful solutions to problems, and exploration of new ideas. The instructor should embrace a variety of expressions that are as unique as the children who are creating them. (NAEA, 2008, p. 1)

Though Ms. Newman did not engage with Keira with the intention of directing her work, she did encourage Keira to finish the work rather than to explore the art-making process. Fostering student-driven arts exploration requires afterschool staff to let go of preconceived notions of what student art should look like. Instead, they must learn to embrace the notion that the arts teach children to uncover possibilities they themselves may have yet to imagine.

The held beliefs of non-arts teachers about the importance of product over process are tenacious. Therefore, project planners must attend to afterschool staff members' arts-related beliefs in order to ensure that students will have opportunities to engage in authentic experiences, unencumbered by staff judgments. A substantive professional development session could both expose the afterschool staff to arts pedagogy and strengthen staff knowledge of a particular genre or media. More on-site professional development for afterschool staff might help to reduce the prevalence of "make-and-take" crafts and

encourage the inclusion of arts experiences designed to encourage students to focus on the process of making art.

The brevity of this project limited our opportunity to connect the afterschool students to the larger community of found-object artists. Exploring reproductions of found art provided an entry point for this connection, but in the future we hope to strengthen the community-school connection by bringing in local professional artists for longer-term projects. Local artists can introduce afterschool program staff to the processes and language of their media. They can act as art mentors to students, sharing their technical expertise while encouraging students to "own" their personal work and artistic decisions. The artists would not take the place of trained art educators or program staff but would work collaboratively with them, sharing content knowledge and pedagogical practices with staff while using their professional expertise to provide students with unique, authentic art experiences.

Despite the challenges, school-based afterschool programs have the potential to become important vehicles for informal arts experiences. As the NAEA (2008) suggests, afterschool art activities may help students to express themselves, explore new ideas, engage in meaning making, and develop their ability to make choices and face challenges. Our research demonstrates that even brief arts experiences can be beneficial to students as long as the arts project includes meaningful content, engages students, and supports student exploration and knowledge building. Rich, meaningful afterschool arts programming enables both students and staff to experience the world and themselves in new and profound ways.

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power sharing

Building Community School Relationships
from Friendship to Marriage

by Carol R. Hill

Afterschool Matters is pleased to include a new regular section, Voices from the Field. This section features work by OST program practitioners including participants in Afterschool Matters Practitioner Fellowships in Philadelphia, Minneapolis, Seattle, and Pittsburgh. Fellows, who are selected by application, engage in a year-long process of reflection and inquiry to improve their practice and program quality. Voices from the Field highlights our Fellows' research and other practitioners' reflections. Its articles undergo a rigorous editorial process but are not peer reviewed.

When I accepted a job with the Bayview Hunters Point YMCA as the director of the Beacon Center on the campus of Burton High School in San Francisco, I found out that New Day for Learning (NDL), an initiative that helps schools implement the community schools model,

had chosen Burton as a pilot site. Not having expected to be part of a community schools initiative, I was uneasy. I had cursory knowledge of community schools as "something they did in New York" in such programs as the Harlem Children's Zone. I had heard that community schools used community partners to help deliver

programs and services to increase educational success for young people.

In my experience, Beacon-school partnerships worked similarly: the school focused on academic success during instructional time and partnered with the Beacon through a community-based organization (CBO) to deliver out-of-school time programs for both youth and adults after dismissal. Additionally, Beacons are charged specifically with turning schools into community hubs that not only bring people to the school site but also participate actively in community life. If those relationships didn't make us a community school, I didn't know what did. This school-CBO relationship had worked fine for decades. I thought, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!"

What I didn't understand was that, though the relationship between Burton High School and the Beacon was not necessarily "broke," it could grow into an even more productive and valuable connection that would benefit all parties. This deeper relationship would go beyond successfully moving the Beacon "silo" next to the school's "silo." We would have to define success mutually from square one, engaging in the imperfect and exciting process of uniting separate and powerful entities. As the Burton-Beacon story illustrates, the community

schools model works best if the parties involved do more than collaborate. The most impressive and replicable outcomes will be achieved if the participants "power share."

Snapshot: Revamping Expectations Two Months In

The school principal, the NDL director, and I were having our first meeting in some time. I was apprehensive. Clearly we were all committed to helping the school not only to improve, but also to thrive. From my perspective, the Beacon programs were developing well: afterschool participation had increased, especially in tutoring, and we had already held a huge community event in Bayview Hunters Point. As far as I knew, I was doing what we had agreed on. However, a couple of repetitions of "Can you drop by my office when you get a chance?" let me know that my partners were getting anxious.

I started honestly: "May I be frank?" (Since my name isn't Frank, the principal and NDL director snickered. One great thing about working with these two is that we all have a sense of humor.) "I'm not sure what you guys want. I was hired to put together this program. Now that it is becoming established, I'm getting negative feedback. If you have an idea or vision that you want me to follow, please give it to me and I will implement it. Other than that, I'm confused."

The principal replied simply, "That's just it, Carol. We don't want you to follow our vision. We feel that the only way this will work is if you co-create the vision with us!" It took a second for what he said to sink in, but then a light bulb went on in my head. The principal and NDL director weren't just units to manage. They wanted not only to collaborate, but also to get my input and help in decision making. Surprise gave way to hope and excitement.

I was experiencing a paradigm shift. My definition of success expanded. I saw the possibilities in the Beacon's goals being the school's goals and vice versa. My program had just moved from being an outside stakeholder to being part owner and creator of the vision that would capitalize on the strengths of all three partners. In that moment, I gave up the "bachelor life" and agreed to a lasting relationship with these entities. I felt that my CBO program was not only "at the table" but even had some power as co-author. I thought I'd better jump right in.

"OK," I said, "let's talk about goals and priorities." The principal began, "My first priority is this high school's students. We have to close the achievement gap, especially with 25 percent of the freshman class earning a GPA of 1.0 or below. So it seems to me that everything we do needs to go to address that." The NDL director followed: "That's great, but I want to make sure we can bring the appropriate services here in accordance with the community schools model. It's really our framework for success." For my turn, I said, "I understand both your priorities, but I need to add that, though my funders mandate that I serve this school, I also have to offer services to this community, as well as to Bayview residents. I can't prioritize one over the other." To which the principal said, "I don't care about the community." After I got over the shock, we all laughed (remember that sense of humor), and I said, "If we're creating this vision together, you're going to have to." We laughed again in relief and agreed to continue.

Collaboration Theory

A few important things came out of that interaction. First, the conversation was honest. Second, each party articulated our needs, even though we didn't agree to adopt one another's agendas immediately and completely. Finally, we embraced the notion that we were doing more than just sharing space. We were co-creating a vision that we could all work toward. Clearly we had gone from partnering to something more profound.

Gil Noam, director of the Program in Afterschool Education and Research and associate professor at both the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the Harvard Medical School, outlines four different kinds of intersection between schools and CBOs: *functional, collaborative, interconnected,* and *transformational* (Noam, 2001). I would boil these down to three categories that can be likened to the degree of seriousness and commitment in romantic relationships: friends with benefits, dating, and marriage. The form any given relationship takes depends largely on the reason for making the connection, how closely and how long the entities plan to work together, and what they plan to achieve.

Friends with Benefits = Partnership

The "friends" relationship in a community school is characterized by impermanence. Partners can agree to have a connection without having to actually work together. The relationship is a fleeting or temporary rapport. The relationship

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may help to fill a real or perceived gap in services for one or both parties, but it doesn't necessarily do so. The reward may be simply that the CBO can claim a link with the school or vice versa. In other words, when you connect, it's great; if you don't, it's no problem. You have no long-term plans for a more permanent relationship. However, you say only good things (or nothing at all) about your partner.

Noam's *functional* model touches on this category. However, in my model, the "friends" category can lead to something greater—though not necessarily with the current partner. In this phase, partnerships are fairly easily severed. This was not the type of partnership I had planned to have with the school—I expected to get to the "dating" stage with Burton HS. However, I thought that friendship would be a close enough relationship with NDL.

Dating = Collaboration

Collaborations, by contrast, inherently require action. Both the school and the CBO decide how their assets, services, and products can complement one another; then they plan to achieve a mutually beneficial goal. Typically, in Beacon relationships, the CBO approaches the school with a proposal to provide a service or to help solve a problem. In return for this service or solution, the CBO gains access to a population of potential participants, an outcome that is important to its funders. Both partners fill a gap, just as in successful dating relationships. People usually enter into a dating relationship to ascertain whether or not they share enough mutual interests and goals to support a deeper bond. A dating-level partnership between a school and a CBO is a similar commitment. Noam (2001) would call this a *collaborative* relationship, "as it leads to the following ends: to make programming possible; to gain access to children, families and funds; or to gain access to previously closed settings such as schools or communities" (p. 11).

I was expecting to have this "dating/collaboration" partnership with Burton HS. This kind of relationship works when the parties want to be connected while maintaining autonomy. I wanted to collaborate closely, but not so closely that I could not extricate my Beacon if we needed to move or modify the program. I wanted to "date seriously," but not be "married."

Marriage = Power Sharing

For routinely commitment-phobic individuals (like me) or organizations, partnerships and collaborations are the safest and most common relationships. Partnerships and collaborations work even if neither party changes anything about itself. However, for "marriage" to work, each entity must surface its expectations and needs. Then each is likely to have to yield at least somewhat to the other in order to achieve a vision that both entities create together. This relationship requires vulnerability and trust. It involves a fair amount of processing. It is transformative for both parties. The school and CBO are stakeholders in each other's individual, as well as mutual, victories. Such a successful union is characterized by power sharing.

Power sharing requires honest recognition and valuation of the assets that each party brings to the table. Then the entities consciously and intentionally co-create their vision. There is no "yours" and "mine" but only "ours." The mutually beneficial outcomes of the co-created vision are *our* outcomes. The school and CBO silos do not merely abut each other; they are torn apart and reconstructed in a way that makes the sharing of resources logical and beneficial to all, especially to youth and communities.

The power-sharing relationship is similar to Noam's *interconnected* school-CBO relationship. In this model, the "sense of intimacy between the partners and their staff and organizational issues might be sufficiently worked out to consider the collaboration as a separate, new entity" (Noam, 2001, p. 13). During the moment in the meeting I describe earlier when I was invited to co-create the vision, a new world of possibilities for more intense and permanent connection with the school opened up in the near future. Basically, the principal asked my Beacon to marry the school, and I accepted. I've made the shift from "girlfriend" to "fiancée."

We're still engaged rather than married at this point. Though the principal and I have deepened the relationship between the school and the Beacon, we still have kinks to work out. There's the matter of the "in-laws"—all the outside entities that we answer to, separately and together, from my lead agency and the San Francisco school district to funders and the San Francisco Beacon initiative—who have to be brought onboard and kept in the loop. We also have to consider the "children" of each party: youth, our staffs, and community residents, to name a few. The process of integration only begins with the Beacon and the school deciding to "get hitched." Now we have the responsibility and the license to begin the real work of implementing the community schools approach by seamlessly and intentionally blending our "families."

Noam says that hardly any collaboration attains the level of his fourth category, *transformative*. "The benefit of this mode over the interconnected one is that learning is an essential ingredient. There is no transformation of values and perspective either individually or collectively without a process of learning" (Noam, 2001, p. 13). The relationship between the school and the Beacon is not

quite there yet—but there is hope. The learning process Noam emphasizes is an essential component of the relationship between the school and CBO. So are patience and forgiveness, which, in our case, have grown as we have learned from our many mistakes and missteps. The Beacon has already integrated physically into the school. For example, the Beacon employment coordinator now works in the school's college and career office. Such moves help to create the synergy that can lead to transformation.

The Honeymoon and Beyond

So far, the "marriage"—the process of power sharing—has not been easy. We have lots and lots of meetings. We have to constantly remember that these gatherings help facilitate the learning process as well as genuine buy-in. Without these two elements, we will not be able to sustain any progress or replicate positive results. Both the Beacon and the school have to actively resist going back into our silos.

All this hard work has led to real progress in bringing the entities closer together. After the meeting I describe earlier, NDL convened a Community Schools Conference in San Francisco. For the first time, all the major partners housed at the school sat at a table to discuss the community school model and brainstorm ways of implementing it. The conversation was often difficult; it helped me understand that we needed to address issues within our separate entities before people could really be open to integration. But that conference helped plant a seed. Later, the school principal, with the help of NDL, convened a meeting of all the partners at the high school to cultivate more mutual and long-term partnerships. After that, to facilitate streamlining of services, the school restructured the leadership team so that the Beacon handles many of the smaller partnerships.

In the restructuring, I represent many non-instructional constituents on the administrative team and department head teams. These meetings give me firsthand information about the school's concerns, especially the instructional and operational issues. I can also help to bring attention to the interests of families and the surrounding community in a way that had not been done before.

In an ongoing effort to increase the school's visibility to the residents of the area, the principal began to participate in and speak at Beacon community events. About six months into the collaboration, the San Francisco Beacon Initiative brought the principal, assistant principal, and me together with community school expert Marty Blank. It was like having a personal master class on community schools! After hearing what we'd done so far, Blank complimented us by saying we were doing great work.

When I attended the Community Schools Conference in Philadelphia with the San Francisco Beacon staff, I really wished that the principal had been able to attend as well, as I was seeing that getting information at the same time was beneficial to both parties. As a substitute, I brought back books on community schools. To ensure that we all had similar information, the principal bought the same books for the leadership team. We formed a learning group to study these and other materials.

Integration of school and Beacon programs began in earnest with the establishment of a plan for a seamless school day. Puma Block (named for the school mascot) now encompasses all afterschool and Saturday activities. Teachers generally bought into the plan, with a few reservations. The Beacon fostered parent and family engagement by beginning adult classes in GED preparation, English as a second language, and computer basics. We also convened an advisory board, made up of youth, parents, teachers, CBO staff, and school administrators, to focus on parent engagement. Finally, the Beacon staff offices integrated into the school. Instead of concentrating in one room, Beacon staff relocated to the dean's office, counseling office, main office, and parent liaison office. Getting out of our Beacon silo and into the school offices helps us to serve students and parents in a way that makes sense *to them*. Furthermore, the summer school in 2011 was run by the Beacon in collaboration with other major partners.

Just as in a marriage, co-creating a shared vision, a viable work plan, and shared outcomes has its peaks and valleys. It also takes a long time and daily attention. Burton HS is reinventing itself as a community school: a hub of high academic achievement for all students, grounded by services and programs designed to engage and grow healthy families and communities. The rewards that youth and parents have already reaped confirm for me that we are on the right track. Though the unification of Burton and the Beacon has not been elegant by any means, we work at it every day—as in a good marriage. I look forward to reporting in a couple of years that our common bond has yielded wildly compelling results for both the school, in collaboration with the Bayview Beacon, and the surrounding community. Those results will be a testament to the very real *power* in power sharing.

Reference

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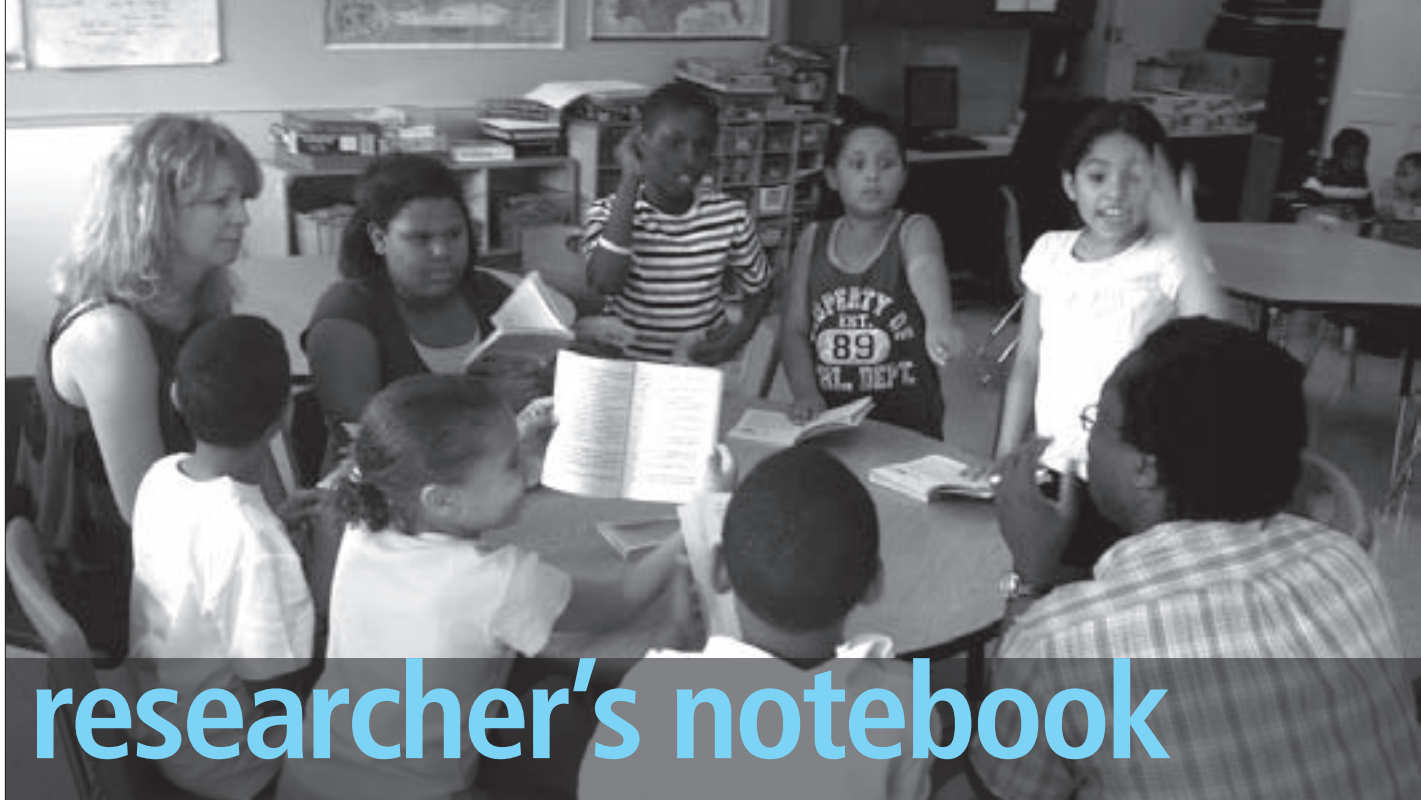
researcher's notebook

Converging Issues in an Out-of-school Time Program for African Refugee Children

by Michelle Porche

Note from the Managing Editor

Immigrant youth and families have historically faced barriers to access and inclusion in a variety of social institutions, including not only schools but also out-of-school time (OST) programs. Language, culture, and social barriers can diminish the contributions OST programs can make to healthy youth and family development. More exploratory research is needed to identify the OST program practices and characteristics that best support immigrant youth and families.

In September 2010, a research team from the Wellesley Centers for Women began such exploratory research in several urban locations in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Our specific aims are to:

- Identify models of OST program delivery for immigrant youth and families
- Document effective practices to support immigrant youth and families, including not only equitable, accessible, high-quality learning practices and connections with schools but also factors related to program infrastructure, staffing, curriculum, and management

Program observation and staff interviews are our major data collection approaches.

This exploratory research study on OST programming with refugee and immigrant families builds on a previous needs assessment that began with community stakeholders in New Hampshire, including African ethnic organizations, mental health providers, school personnel, and government agencies. (For information, see www.wcwonline.org/nhrefugee.)

The Wellesley Centers for Women recently began a collaboration with one of the major stakeholders in that needs assessment, the Women for Women Coalition, to develop and pilot an ongoing family intervention in New Hampshire. The resulting collaborative project, Africans United for Stronger Families, includes a support group for parents and an OST program for their children. Africans United is a scientifically based family support program whose curriculum was developed by the Wellesley Centers for Women and the Women for Women Coalition based on research into African refugee parents' and communities' priorities for their children's education and well-being.

An integral part of the family support intervention is a culturally responsive OST program for adolescents. Developed and administered by the Women for Women Coalition, this program focuses on academic success and offers extensive tutoring and homework help. The Manchester School Department provides some funding to Women for Women Coalition to help with academic tutoring for elementary-age children; funding for programming for older students is provided by grants from local foundations.

The following field notes begin to capture the profound interconnection of culture, race, trauma, language, age, family, and social norms in an OST and family support program. Field notes are the notes that a researcher—in this case, Michelle Porche—takes during study observations. They may later be used for report writing, journaling, discussion, or subsequent study design. Michelle's field notes come from the needs assessment and the Africans United intervention study.

Field Notes, November 2010

The refugee population of New Hampshire includes families who have come in sequential waves of resettlement from Eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia, most as a result of war. One of the earlier waves was from Bosnia; then came refugees from various African countries and more recently from Bhutan, a tiny Asian nation. Although these groups share trauma experiences and resettlement challenges, they differ by culture, language, visibility as an ethnic minority, and family education and literacy levels. These factors all play a part in expectations about in-school and OST experiences.

Approximately 5,000 African refugees have resettled in New Hampshire over the last decades, often with the help of Lutheran Social Services. They come from the war-torn countries of Burundi, Congo, Rwanda, Liberia, Somalia, and Sudan, to name a few. Each country has its own language and customs, but they share some common African cultural practices. Somalis tend to be more highly educated, while other groups range in their level of formal education. Some groups are illiterate in both their native language and English. Liberian refugees enter the U.S. knowing English, so they have some advantage in adjustment.

In contrast to Bosnian refugees, who arrived in this country fresh from day-to-day war experiences, many African refugees fled from war in their home countries to refugee camps in neighboring countries and then spent years in the camps before being resettled to the U.S. Thus, though the children may not have experienced directly the atrocities their parents endured, they suffer from secondary trauma. The camps were often dangerous, and poor nutrition, which can affect brain development and lead to later cognitive and behavioral problems, was a constant concern.

Acculturative Stress

Parents and children become acculturated at vastly different rates. Because of children's immersion in school, they learn English much more quickly and often have to serve as translators for their parents (although legally, non-English speaking refugees and immigrants have a right to translation services, and children should not be relied on to translate health- and education-related interactions).

New Hampshire, the "Live Free or Die" state, poses particular challenges for African parents, who report that their children are taught (or simply internalize) messages from peers and adults that they are now "free," which is interpreted to mean doing anything they want and having complete independence from parents and elders.

This rebellion is one of the most distressing aspects of resettlement; it often retriggers the parents' trauma. In a common example, children rebel against discipline from their parents and call 911 in response to corporal punishment, a culturally accepted practice among Africans. Police often rely on the children for translation. The parents are powerless, and their authority is undermined. Teens' newfound independence may also be manifest in breaking curfew and engaging in delinquent behaviors. The difficulties are exacerbated for youth who enter the U.S. as older teenagers and are placed in classrooms according to age rather than literacy level. Some of these youth, mostly boys, find that they successfully obtain the respect of peers by being "tough" and by breaking school rules and the law.

As visible members of a minority group in a majority white community, youth and parents report incidents of racism and discrimination, which also may lead to conflicts in school and in OST programs. Interestingly, reports from youth highlighted conflicts with other minorities, primarily Latino immigrants, and with other African ethnic groups. Some youth and community leaders have reported that white students sometimes encourage these conflicts, helping to pit one group against another. New students are often placed in special education or ESL classrooms, and the process of moving to mainstream programs is slow.

Cultural Conflicts in OST Programming

Emphasis on recreation is a Western notion not easily understood by African refugee parents. In an earlier needs assessment, we found that Anglo community leaders suggested youth soccer leagues as a response to trauma issues. More generally, this suggestion reflected beliefs about the importance of building self esteem and acknowledged the popularity of soccer in other countries as compared to the U.S. While the recreational opportunities provided by OST programs are important, African parents and community leaders give them low priority as responses to youths' struggles with academic requirements. Parents are genuinely perplexed about the many dances in middle and high schools and in afterschool pro-

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grams; they believe the dances encourage dating before children are ready and too often occur on school nights or last too late into the evening. These parents have endured extreme hardships to get their families to the U.S. in order to give their children a better life, and educational achievement is seen as the avenue for success.

In addition to its academic focus, parents feel that the Women for Women Coalition program reinforces culturally based behavioral expectations. The program director is working with parents and youth in an attempt to institute a practice of allowing students to go to non-academic programs as a reward for improved homework practices and strong grades.

Recently, the program director held a meeting with directors of the other afterschool programs to bridge cultural understanding and to coordinate participation of African youth. Currently, the feeling is that these programs are competing for African youth. The youth gravitate towards less structured programs with limited monitoring, which undermines the community's emphasis on academic achievement and family cohesion. The goal of the meeting was to introduce cultural competence to staff at the other programs and to work together to coordinate how they can best serve African refugee students.

Looking Forward

Lessons learned from working with this African refugee program in New Hampshire, along with observation and interview data from immigrant and refugee OST programs in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, will help to inform the development of strategies and related training for OST programs that serve immigrant and refugee populations. Although language and acculturation challenges overlap for immigrant and refugee youth and families, the unique cultural backgrounds of various groups and their histories of migration will differ. Children's educational experiences in their countries of origin and their English proficiency when they immigrate to the U.S. may influence their initial participation in OST activities. For refugees, mental health concerns related to community and individual trauma may have a significant impact on children's behavioral patterns and well-being. Each of these components should be considered in working with immigrant and refugee youth in OST programs and in reaching out to their parents.

Afterschool Matters

Call for Papers
Fall 2012 Issue

Afterschool Matters, a national, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to promoting professionalism, scholarship. and consciousness in the field of afterschool education, is seeking material for the Fall 2012 issue. Published by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time with support from the Robert Bowne Foundation, the journal serves those involved in developing and running programs for youth during the out-of-school time hours, in addition to those engaged in research and in shaping youth development policy.

Afterschool Matters seeks scholarly work, from a variety of disciplines, which can be applied to or is based on the afterschool arena. The journal also welcomes submissions that explore practical ideas for working with young people during the out-of-school hours. Articles should connect to current theory and practice in the field by relating to previously published research; a range of academic perspectives will be considered. We also welcome personal or inspirational narratives and essays for our section "Voices from the Field."

Any topic related to the theory and practice of out-of-school-time programming will be considered for the Fall 2012 issue; however, we are particularly interested in receiving manuscripts on learning experiences and research focusing on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) in OST programs. We invite you to discuss possible topics in advance with us. Suggested topics include:

- Descriptions, research, and analyses of out-of-school time programs that support learning through STEM experiences
- Descriptions and analyses of community-based youth organizations as institutions that support youth development through activities focused on civic engagement, social and emotional development, arts development, project-based learning, or other strategies
- Exploration of OST topics such as youth engagement, staff professional development, citywide system-building, and physical activity and healthy eating

Submission Guidelines
- Deadline is January 20, 2012, for the Fall 2012 issue of Afterschool Matters.
- Submissions should be in a 12-point font, including quotations and references, and submitted electronically in Microsoft Word or Rich Text format.
- Submissions should not exceed 5,000 words.
- Include a cover sheet with the manuscript title, authors' names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses.
- The names of the authors should not appear on the text, as submissions are reviewed anonymously by peers.
- Follow the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition (July 2009), for reference style guidelines. Present important information in the text and do not use extensive footnotes.

Inquiries about possible articles or topics are welcome.
To inquire or to submit articles, contact:

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the *Afterschool Matters* journal. Please go to the link below to take a five-minute survey about the journal. There will be a $50 Amazon gift card awarded to one respondent, chosen at random, on December 15.

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Thank you for your time!