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See the inside back cover for the call for papers for the Spring 2013 issue of Afterschool Matters.

Welcome

I had the fortune to grow up within two blocks of my neighborhood library. It had one of the only photocopiers in town! Though my childhood friends and I used the library regularly, we probably didn't fully appreciate what a substantial asset it was to our lives.

Our reasons to go to the library then do not much differ from what draws children and youth to libraries today—access to technology (now the computer instead of the copier), magazines (now online and much more plentiful than we could ever have imagined), book research and background for reports (from the card catalog to the Internet), activities, and socializing with friends. Though the concept of a library dates back thousands of years, its purpose—to provide a repository of our history, thinking, and experiences—is no less relevant today. That my friends and I found a branch right there in our own neighborhood foreshadowed the current thinking that the library should be a vital part of a community and not just a venue for borrowing books.

In this issue of *Afterschool Matters*, Nia Imani Fields and Elizabeth Rafferty describe the partnership between the Baltimore County Public Library System and the Baltimore County 4-H. Together the partners developed a teen afterschool program that has offered experiences in workforce readiness, science, nutrition, community engagement, and leadership. Fields and Rafferty uncover a truth that goes beyond their particular setting: "[B]oth partners realized that, if we worked together to combine program resources and strengths, the impact of our initiatives would be far greater than if we worked alone."

Libraries, along with other community organizations, can be important contributors to and partners in the out-of-school time program arena. As Fields and Rafferty mention, with libraries come some major ingredients for supporting community and youth development—facilities, youth participants, and, above all, librarians. National Library Week begins April 8. It's a perfect time to explore partnership and make some noise (at library level, please) in your local branch.

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systemwide implementation of project-based learning
The Philadelphia Approach

by Jason Schwalm and Karen Smuck Tylek

In summer 2009, the City of Philadelphia and its intermediary, the Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC), introduced project-based learning to a network of more than 180 out-of-school time (OST) programs. Use of project-based learning is now required of all city-funded OST programs that are managed by PHMC.

OST programs have completed nearly 1,700 projects since the fall of 2009, when this initiative began. Though project topics vary widely, from science exploration to community service, from studies of Greek mythology to modern media, all projects now share a common methodology. With the implementation of project-based learning, PHMC program specialists, who observe programs across the network, have noted improvements in key areas of program quality as defined in local and national frameworks.

This article describes Philadelphia's systemwide approach to project-based learning. First, we review the scholarly literature to define the strategy and discuss its outcomes. Next, we describe Philadelphia's systems approach to project-based learning in OST and outline its successes. Finally, we discuss the challenges presented by a systems approach to implementation, offering recommendations to other cities and their intermediaries that wish to implement project-based learning on a systemwide basis.

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No research analyzing the impact of systemwide implementation of project-based learning on an OST network exists. We hope to open this conversation in the OST community and in the scholarly literature. Meanwhile, PHMC continues to collect and analyze data provided by network OST programs. In the summer of 2012, we will complete a study of the impact of workshops on staff's knowledge and comfort in implementing project-based learning. This study will also analyze the effect of project-based learning on students' collaboration skills and confidence in learning.

Background

A rich body of scholarly literature discussing project-based learning (PBL) already exists, although most of it focuses on schools. Though the strategy is only loosely defined in the literature, most scholars agree that PBL is an effective, engaging way to teach both core concepts and non-curricular skills. However, less research details implementation of PBL in OST, and we have found no research discussing the systemwide implementation of PBL in a network of OST providers.

Project-based Learning Defined

PBL is an approach to instruction that emphasizes "authentic learning tasks grounded in the personal interests of learners" (Grant, 2009, p. 1). The Buck Institute for Education calls PBL "a systematic teaching method that engages students in learning knowledge and skills through an extended inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and tasks." (Markham, 2003, p. 4). However it is defined, PBL presents students with real-world, multidisciplinary problems that demand critical thinking, engagement, and collaboration.

In the PBL model implemented by PHMC, every project begins with an open-ended "driving question" that prompts interdisciplinary, student-initiated inquiry. Throughout the project, activities flow naturally from the driving question to the "culminating event," a public presentation of the results of the investigation.

A good driving question is one of the critical components of PBL (Blumenfeld et al., 1991; Markham, 2003). The driving question should be open-ended enough to

sustain many weeks of inquiry and investigation. It should also be authentic and relevant to students. A successful project speaks to the interests of students in a concrete, meaningful way, encouraging students to see the real-world applicability of the concepts they are learning. This kind of question allows students to "[engage] in more idiosyncratic investigations, directing their own learning and making decisions about what they are going to do and how they will do it" (Yetkiner, Anderoglu, & Capraro, 2008, p. 1).

A good culminating event involves the public presentation of students' learning (Savery, 2006). In preparing the event, students synthesize and apply what they have learned. Instructors can use the culminating event to assess students' mastery of the skills and concepts learned during the project.

Many Philadelphia OST providers find that PBL benefits their programs by engaging both staff and students in a coordinated effort. Rebecca Mulligan, youth program director at the Norris Square Neighborhood Project (NSNP), says that "PBL gives a bigger purpose to each day's activities and engages students in a broader perspective." Neida Quinones, a group leader of second and third graders at NSNP, says, "I see the youth excited about the projects and suggesting possible themes and driving questions." PBL gives purpose to the staff's work as well. Loretta Crea, chief financial officer of Sunrise, Inc., says that most of her afterschool staff "are looking for direction, and PBL gives them that." The structure of PBL keeps youth and staff working toward a goal. "The driving question puts them on the path, and the culminating event brings it all together," Crea says.

The Impact of Project-based Learning

A growing body of research demonstrates that PBL is an effective way to teach core content, as well as higher-order thinking skills. Students in classrooms that incorporate PBL perform at least as well on standardized tests as their peers in traditional classrooms (Thomas, 2000). Walker and Leary arrive at a similar conclusion, noting that "even when the scope is limited to standardized tests of concepts, PBL is able to hold its own in comparison to lecture-based approaches" (2009, p. 27). Additionally, PBL seems to facilitate success for students who have

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trouble learning in the traditional classroom (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008).

PBL is also an effective tool for imparting essential non-academic 21st-century skills, including collaboration, critical thinking, and communication. Traditional educational methods that rely on rote memorization don't develop these vital skills (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008; Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). In contrast, PBL has been demonstrated to improve students' ability to reason and argue clearly (Stepien, Gallagher, & Workman, 1993), to answer conceptual problems (Boaler, 1997), and to hypothesize accurately (Schmidt et al., 1996).

PBL in Out-of-School Time

While most existing research on PBL focuses on school-day application, the PBL approach also supports established quality indicators and youth development principles in the afterschool setting. PBL capitalizes on the strengths of OST programming: smaller student-to-teacher ratios and informal learning environments. It also aligns with Philadelphia's OST standards, as described below, as well as with national frameworks including the Massachusetts Afterschool Research Study (MARS) by the Intercultural Center for Research in Education and the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (2005).

The PBL method is well suited to application in afterschool because of the strengths and unique features of OST programming. Afterschool programs are not burdened by rigid class schedules or formal learning requirements. Additionally, afterschool programs tend to require smaller student-to-teacher ratios. Schools operate under different requirements. As Seidel, Aryeh, and Steinberg (2002) note, "increasingly, advocates of project-based and experiential learning are looking to after-school as an excellent setting for this type of work" (p. 16).

PBL gives afterschool programs an opportunity to integrate rigorous academic content without losing the fun and informality of OST programming. At the end of a long school day, many students have a natural desire to move and play; they may be less open to teacher-driven instruction. However, "unlike the rather serendipitous learning that can occur through play, project-based learning activities can provide more intentional and planned learning experiences, while still offering many attractive qualities of play" (Alexander, 2000, p. 1).

Additionally, PBL supports OST quality indicators. The MARS study identified five key quality indicators: staff engagement with youth; youth engagement; high-quality, challenging activities; quality homework time; and family relationships at pick-up time. PBL strongly supports the first three of these indicators. In PBL, staff members engage with youth to guide them through the projects, and youth work in teams, engaging with one another as well as with staff. PBL also facilitates hands-on learning in student-driven investigations, resulting in high-quality, challenging activities.

The PBL model also supports key youth development practices. California's Community Network for Youth Development (2006) lists five key supports and opportunities for youth development: safety, relationship building, youth participation, community involvement, and skill building. Leaving aside safety as a basic necessity of all programs, PBL addresses the remaining four key supports, particularly meaningful youth participation and skill building. In PBL, youth drive their own learning rather than serving as passive recipients of programming. Community service or involvement often emerges when youth choose a project that tackles a community need. PBL also emphasizes collaboration when youth work in teams, often building strong relationships with peers and facilitators.

Because of its flexibility, PBL is well suited to systemwide application. The PBL method does not prescribe content, so it can be easily tailored to the needs of specific groups and even of individual learners. Because it emphasizes authentic learning and student engagement, PBL is an effective tool to ensure program quality across a diverse network of OST providers.

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The Philadelphia Approach

The Philadelphia approach to PBL attempts to preserve the flexibility of the PBL model while introducing the structure and uniformity needed to facilitate systemwide implementation. Other city or regional networks interested in implementing a similar approach can learn from

the experience of the Philadelphia network. This section outlines the history of PBL implementation in Philadelphia, the network's structure of expectations and supports for OST providers, and the successes PHMC program specialists have observed.

History

The Philadelphia OST network, created in 1999 and funded by state and city dollars, comprises more than 180 programs operated by 66 different community-based organizations, many of which have little in common. In 2008, the City of Philadelphia and PHMC sought a way to unify the network and ensure quality in this diverse group of programs. Deciding on PBL, a model at once structured and flexible, PHMC contracted with the Buck Institute for Education to adapt its school-day model of PBL for the OST setting.

OST programs in the Philadelphia network were required to adopt PBL by fall 2009. Site directors, having participated in a two-day train-the-trainer workshop given by the Buck Institute, were expected to deliver the content of this workshop to their staff. However, as the deadline drew near, providers began to request assistance and additional training. In response, PHMC held workshops to support project planning. These workshops were the beginning of what would become a full menu of free PBL workshops offered by PHMC to city-funded OST providers.

Structure of the Philadelphia Approach

Although PBL is a student-driven and flexible model, the Philadelphia approach requires concrete administrative standards. PHMC developed guidelines for OST providers to structure the PBL process, including timeframes for project completion and required documentation. Some of these guidelines have evolved over time in response to programs' feedback.

Project Timeframes

As Table 1 shows, older students complete longer projects that explore subjects in greater depth than do younger students.

During the school year, OST programs spend at least three or four hours per week implementing PBL. This amount of time takes into account the need for homework help, snack, physical activity, and other activities typically included in elementary OST programs. The hourly requirement also accommodates middle and high school programs that operate as clubs, where youth may attend only two or three days per week.

Documentation

The Philadelphia approach to PBL includes forms for planning, tracking, and evaluating projects and student performance. Staff and participants use the project planning and group task list forms to plan and implement projects. At the project's end, students complete debriefing forms to reflect on the project, and staff complete rubrics to assess student performance. From a systems perspective, these documents also help the funder or intermediary to track programs' implementation of PBL. All of the forms are available on the Philadelphia PBL blog at www.ostprojects.wordpress.org.

Supports

The Philadelphia approach emphasizes the delivery of support, resources, and assistance to OST providers. These supports empower OST programs that, individually, might lack the capacity or familiarity with PBL to train staff or implement the model effectively.

City-funded OST programs are supported by their PHMC program specialists, who provide monitoring and technical assistance. Program specialists observe program delivery during site visits and make targeted, site-specific

Table 1. Project Duration by Grade Level

	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	MIDDLE SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL
Minimum number of projects per school year	4	4	4
Duration of a project	3–5 weeks	4–6 weeks	4–10 weeks

recommendations. When needed, they also refer staff to workshops or more intensive coaching provided by the project-based learning coordinator.

Since the introduction of PBL in fall 2009, PHMC has delivered more than 80 sessions of PBL workshops to more than 1,000 OST staff. These workshops range from basic courses outlining the driving philosophy of PBL and the rudiments of PBL implementation to more advanced workshops that suggest strategies for the incorporation of literacy, youth leadership, and higher-order thinking skills.

Additionally, the Philadelphia PBL blog details best practices, provides sample projects, and houses essential information and required documents. PHMC has also created a 12-minute instructional video outlining the basics of effective PBL implementation. The video, which is available on the PBL blog, is often shown at training sessions.

Successes

After two years of systemwide training and implementation, the PBL model is employed year-round by every program in the city-funded network. PHMC program specialists have observed that implementation of PBL is having a positive impact on the quality and rigor of program activities, as defined not only by national frameworks like the MARS study but also by the Core Standards for Philadelphia's Youth Programs (City of Philadelphia, 2002). These local standards are organized into categories that include human relationships, program implementation, and activities. Each category carries a quality level of 1–3. PHMC program specialists have observed that PBL supports programs in reaching level 3 standards. Their observations show that PBL has enabled programs to better incorporate youth voice, develop students' 21st-century skills, offer structured activities, and improve staff development.

Incorporating youth voice is a central tenet of PBL. Youth are generally invested and participate actively in projects that revolve around their interests, questions, or needs. We have observed that a majority of programs in the Philadelphia network now consult with youth to select project topics. Youth in the elementary program at Centro Nueva Creación, for example, decided that they were tired of seeing trash in their community and wanted to investigate ways to improve the local and global environment. They launched a community clean-up, planted a garden, and performed a play to educate the community about environmental issues.

PBL develops 21st-century skills including critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. The essence of PBL is problem solving, a key critical thinking skill. The approach also requires students to work in teams and to communicate their findings. Cardinal Bevilacqua Community Center staff member Vinh Nguyen works with high school students who recently completed a project to raise funds for local charities. "When these teens come here…they're developing a lot of skills that they're not normally developing in schools," he says. "When they come here and they engage in projects… they are learning how to work together as a team, how to problem solve, and how to really accomplish goals that they're setting for themselves."

PHMC has seen an increase in the incidence of structured activities and learning opportunities across the OST network. The PBL approach requires staff to plan activities with purpose and to tie each day's work to the project's ultimate goal. Whether the project involves kindergarteners planning an imaginary vacation to Hawaii, middle school students repurposing trash into jewelry and selling it for a profit, or high school students learning culinary and business skills to win a Restaurant Wars–style competition, project activities demand forethought and preparation because they are building toward a larger purpose.

In many programs, PBL has had a positive impact on staff development. Some providers embraced PBL from the outset, recognizing it as a way to develop staff talents alongside students' skills. PHMC also found that some providers who were initially resistant to PBL came to recognize its value over time. Teri Mitchell, the site director of the OST program at Catholic Social Services, Our Lady, Help of Christians, explained that, while staff were initially skeptical of PBL, "staff have really taken ownership of their projects." Moreover, Mitchell noted, "Using PBL, staff members design creative, diverse projects that really engage the children."

Philadelphia's principal motivation for implementing PBL systemwide was to introduce a baseline standard of quality and rigor for OST programs throughout the network. Although many afterschool programs offered planned and experiential activities long before PBL was introduced to the system, other programs were less purposeful about program design. Since the introduction of PBL, OST programs have completed over 1,700 projects. Elementary students complete at least four projects a year, and high school students complete at least three projects a year. PHMC is currently collecting and analyzing data, with plans to measure the impact of PBL on students' collaboration skills and learning confidence. However, the effective implementation of PBL systemwide, and the minimum standards of quality this method ensures, have already demonstrated success.

Challenges and Recommendations

After two years of implementing PBL across the OST network, PHMC and the City of Philadelphia have created a systemwide approach that could be adopted by other cities and their intermediaries. Admittedly, implementing PBL on a systemwide basis is not without challenges, and little expert research exists to help. This section details some of the challenges and offers recommendations to those interested in implementing PBL across an OST system.

Tension between PBL and Other Academic Goals

A number of OST providers in the Philadelphia network reported that they encountered a conflict between PBL and other academic goals, most commonly homework help. Afterschool program hours can be frustratingly short, and OST providers must balance traditional OST programming—snack, homework help, and physical activity—with PBL activities. Initially many Philadelphia OST providers saw PBL as another scheduling demand to be incorporated into an already overcrowded day.

To some extent, this conflict exists. The PBL approach emphasizes planned, rigorous activities of a kind some OST programs are not accustomed to implementing. However, PBL is not meant to be another item on the schedule, sandwiched between one activity and another during an already busy day. Ideally, PBL is an integral part of the program—not a discrete activity but a methodology woven through each activity. Many PHMC program specialists observed that the OST providers who reported tension between PBL and other program activities were often still struggling to grasp the nuances of PBL.

Recommendation: Incorporate PBL into Other Activities

The PBL methodology emphasizes experiential, student-driven activities covering a wide range of subject areas. Effective PBL implementation can be woven into art and music enrichment, academic instruction, gardening, health and fitness activities, and any other common afterschool activity. For example, a program with an arts focus may already offer music and dance classes. This program could incorporate those classes into a larger project to examine the cultural roots and evolution of music and dance styles. Project activities enhance, rather than compete with, the program's existing enrichment.

Any intermediary implementing PBL throughout an OST network should emphasize that PBL is a methodology rather than a new type of activity. It is a way of thinking about OST programming, and a way of planning after-school activities, that enriches the work OST programs are already doing.

Recommendation: Help Parents Understand

Many parents, uncomfortable with helping their children with homework or simply unable to do so, expect the primary focus of the afterschool program to be homework help. The Philadelphia OST providers who successfully integrated PBL into their programming communicated extensively with parents about the OST program's goals and how PBL fit in. Parents who understand how PBL contributes to a child's educational development can become stakeholders in the afterschool program and the PBL process. As a short-term solution, a number of successful programs offered homework assistance at the end of the afterschool session, rather than at the beginning, to discourage parents who were primarily interested in homework help from picking up their children before PBL activities had been completed.

Lack of Staff Training and Buy-in

Successful PBL requires the effective participation of an engaged staff. PHMC program specialists observed that poor implementation often resulted when staff members were not well trained or were not committed to PBL.

In Philadelphia, sometimes lack of staff buy-in resulted from simple confusion. After the train-the-trainer workshop in June 2009, some site directors were more successful than others in relaying the content to their own staff. Additionally, turnover in the months between June and October left some sites without any staff trained in PBL.

At other times, lack of buy-in was the result of the staff's resistance to the PBL instructional model. School districts that have attempted to incorporate PBL on a systemwide basis report a similar phenomenon. "Changing an entire school culture is really hard work," says Corey Sholes, a former principal in the Bonner Springs School District near Kansas City, Kansas, where Expeditionary Learning Schools use a project-based model. "You just can't do it without the support of both administration and the teachers" (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008, p. 3).

Recommendation: Establish a Training Pipeline

Because professional development for OST program staff is essential to successfully implementing PBL on a systemwide basis, a training pipeline should be in place at project initiation. PHMC now offers a full menu of free PBL workshops, from introductory workshops on the basics of PBL planning and implementation to more specialized

workshops. These workshops are offered on a rotating basis and are available on-site when a program requests coaching. To encourage attendance, workshop facilitators are certified by the state agency that licenses afterschool programs in Pennsylvania. The workshops count toward the mandatory professional development hours required of licensed programs.

Recommendation: Train Direct-Service Staff

PHMC initially offered training to site directors and agency leaders but not to direct-service staff. However, frontline staff members were widely responsible for implementing and, at some sites, planning projects. To address this gap, PHMC expanded its trainings to include direct-service staff. As they attended trainings, frontline staff members learned the PBL philosophy and method firsthand. Many came to embrace PBL because it gave cohesion and direction to their own best practices. Moreover, PHMC found that training veteran staff members empowered them to become PBL advocates in their own OST programs.

Uniform Implementation of PBL in a Diverse OST Network

Any attempt to reshape programming throughout an entire OST system will meet challenges, particularly in a diverse network of providers. The introduction of PBL in the Philadelphia OST network marked a paradigm shift. For some providers, PBL presented a significant change from the traditional OST pattern of snack, homework assistance, and physical activity. For others, the PBL approach mirrored the kinds of enrichment activities they were already implementing. PHMC created a series of administrative reporting requirements—observations by PHMC's program specialists and PBL coordinator as well as site self-reporting on project plans, task lists, rubrics, and debriefing forms—to encourage uniform, high-quality implementation of PBL.

While PBL emphasizes fluidity and individualized learning, administrative standards are, by their nature, one-size-fits-all. Administrative requirements necessary to ensure rigorous, thoughtful PBL implementation were often in tension with flexible, organic PBL methods. Resolving this tension was a significant challenge. Program specialists reported resistance to the required

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documentation in particular. At best, documentation is a useful tool that encourages program staff to think deliberately about project design, gives students a forum for reflecting on their experience, and allows program specialists to provide concrete, targeted coaching and assistance. However, any required documentation can easily become a *pro forma* exercise that loses meaning over time if staff members lose sight of its purpose.

Recommendation: Implement a Pilot Program

Every OST program is different, and every network of OST providers has its own needs. Piloting PBL with a small number of programs before introducing it to the OST network can allow the intermediary to respond more easily to concerns and requests for assistance. Because PHMC did not implement such a pilot, it was not fully prepared to provide the extensive, network-wide professional development that proved to be needed. A pilot would enable the intermediary to anticipate the requests and challenges unique to its OST network. Additionally, a pilot would allow successful OST providers to share their best practices with colleagues so program staff could learn from others' experience.

Recommendation: Set Clear Expectations

PHMC set clear expectations for its network of providers, minimizing confusion in the early stages of PBL implementation. Any other city or intermediary attempting systemwide implementation should be prepared to answer concrete questions about the number of projects per year, number of hours per project, number of hours per day, and number of days per week that PBL activities are expected to be implemented, as well as about any required documentation. Though a looser, case-by-case basis approach may seem appealing, especially given the flexible nature of PBL itself, the resources and support offered to OST providers are most effective if expectations are uniform.

Opening a Conversation

PBL is an integral part of the day at many primary and secondary schools and at colleges and universities. Its effectiveness has been repeatedly demonstrated in the scholarly literature. While most literature on PBL focuses on formal learning opportunities, the PBL approach supports key ar-

eas of OST quality and youth development principles. Despite the challenges of adopting PBL systemwide, PHMC has found PBL to have a positive impact on the quality and rigor of program activities. Implementing PBL has enabled programs to better incorporate youth voice; develop students' 21st-century skills; offer structured, planned activities; and improve staff development. PHMC has found that the benefits of PBL outweigh the challenges of managing tight schedules, obtaining staff buy-in, and training staff systemwide. We hope that this case study and recommendations from Philadelphia will open a conversation in the OST community and in the scholarly literature.

In 2011–2012, PHMC is conducting research on the effectiveness of various aspects of its systemwide approach to PBL. PHMC will assess the impact not only of PBL workshops on staff's knowledge of PBL and comfort in implementing it but also of PBL activities on students' collaboration skills and confidence in learning. The results of these studies will be available in summer 2012.

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healthy eating in out-of-school time

The Promise and the Challenge

by Jean L. Wiecha, Georgia Hall, Ellen Gannett, and Barbara Roth

More than 30 percent of American children are either overweight or obese (Ogden, Carroll, Curtin, Lamb, & Flegal, 2010), with a body mass index (BMI) in the 85th percentile or above. Although prevalence varies by age, sex, and ethnicity, all groups are affected (Ogden et al., 2010).

Risk of serious health problems increases with increasing BMI. Childhood obesity, characterized by BMI in the 95th percentile or above, affects 16.9 percent of two- to nineteen-year-olds; it is associated with increased risk of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and type 2 diabetes (Barlow, 2007). Childhood obesity also increases the risk of obesity and chronic disease during adulthood (Whitaker, Wright, Pepe, Seidel, & Dietz, 1997).

Specific childhood dietary practices promote healthy weights and help reduce chronic disease risk. These include reducing intake of sugar-sweetened beverages (James, Thomas, Cavan, & Kerr, 2004; Ludwig, Peterson, & Gortmaker, 2001) and foods containing trans fats, added sugar, and refined grains (U.S. Department of Agriculture & U.S. Department of Health

The co-authors, founders of the Healthy Out-of-School Time (HOST) Coalition, worked with the coalition to develop voluntary OST standards for healthy eating and physical activity. These standards were adopted by the National Afterschool Association in 2011.

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and Human Services, 2010). The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children eat a healthy breakfast and five or more fruits and vegetables daily. Other recommendations include letting children regulate their own intake and engaging the whole family in healthy habits (Barlow, 2007).

Every organization that feeds children can employ these dietary strategies. Out-of-school time (OST) programs, which serve over 8 million children per year (Afterschool Alliance, 2009), are a promising setting for nurturing healthy eating habits. Children may be in programs for 15 or more hours per week during the school year and all day in the summer. Most programs provide at least one snack or meal and strive for positive role modeling (National AfterSchool Association, 1998). Environmental interventions that limit food choices to healthy options show promise in general and specifically in OST (Mozaffarian et al., 2010; Story, Kaphingst, Robinson-O'Brien, & Glanz, 2008). While the quality of foods and beverages served nationally in OST programs is unknown, limited research (Mozaffarian et al., 2010) and our field experience suggest wide variability.

OST program menus may reflect voluntary quality standards or standards set by public agencies. For example, programs that serve children from low-income families may provide snacks or meals through the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program or Summer Meals Program. Meals funded by these programs must meet federal menu guidelines. Some programs serve snacks or meals provided through the National School Lunch Program in their school district. Other programs follow menu guidelines from non-regulatory bodies such as the YMCA, California CANFIT, and Alliance for a Healthier Generation. An unknown number of OST programs operate with no menu guidelines at all.

The patchwork system of nutrition guidelines may contribute to variable OST menu quality. An essential first step in determining how to address this issue involves understanding the perspectives of individuals who manage key OST organizations. We used qualitative research methods to explore healthy eating concepts among OST program administrators. We examined their perception of the importance of the childhood obesity epidemic in relation to their mission. We also explored perceived barriers to serving healthful foods and the potential utility of

> Where do childhood obesity, physical activity, and healthy eating fit into the agenda and priorities for OST programs in your community, city, region, or network of organizations?

guidelines and other managerial supports in helping programs adopt healthy eating practices.

Methods

The research team, consisting of the authors, developed a semi-structured interview to identify the factors affecting healthy eating and physical activity in OST. The interview included 13 guiding questions. We consolidated responses to these questions under four headings:

1. Where do childhood obesity, physical activity, and healthy eating fit into the agenda and priorities for OST programs in your community, city, region, or network of organizations?
2. What are the barriers that OST programs face in achieving their goals for healthy eating?
3. Describe the standards and guidelines for healthy eating used in the OST programs in your community, city, region, or network. Would more rigorous and specific guidelines be likely to improve practices?
4. What supports—management, staffing, guidelines, communication, training, financial resources, other infrastructure—need to be in place or would have to change to support healthy eating practices?

We then identified 17 key OST organizations that provide, coordinate, or improve services or that conduct policy or advocacy work on behalf of large provider networks. We selected interviewees purposefully rather than trying to identify a representative sample because we wanted to include prominent organizations with major accomplishments. Individuals from 14 organizations contributed the comments about healthy eating included in this analysis. All interview participants were senior staff, including unit or program managers, directors, and executives. The organizations were statewide (n=4); regional (n=6) covering a major metropolitan area, county, or counties; or national (n=4) in scope. They were either governmental (n=5) or private nonprofit (n=9) entities. Two organizations had more than one interview participant. Each participant gave verbal consent to the interview protocol, which had been approved by the institutional review boards at Wellesley College and the University of Massachusetts Boston.

All four of us conducted phone interviews in spring 2010. Each interview lasted 30–60 minutes. Not all par-

ticipants responded to every question. The interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed.

We analyzed interview transcripts thematically using techniques described by Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003). Two members of the research team reviewed and coded interview transcripts to organize segments under headings related to the interview prompts. When the interviewers' coding did not match, we maintained the transcript fragment under multiple headings until the next phase of the analysis identified its best placement. We then parsed these segments into smaller fragments of one to several sentences on a single theme. Themes were not determined a priori but were allowed to emerge from the text. A theme mentioned by a participant in response to a specific question was counted once regardless of the number of occurrences. For example, if "more training" appeared five times in one response, we tallied only one occurrence.

Leaders' Perceptions of Healthy Eating in OST

Our presentation of the interview comments corresponds to our four broad-based questions. We maintain our respondents' anonymity, identifying them by the geographic scope of their organization's work and by organization type.

Priority of Healthy Eating

Respondents were highly concerned about childhood obesity. They identified physical activity and healthy eating as important components of their work. Among 12 organizations commenting on this topic, one interviewee described these issues as the organization's top priority, and two reported they were the second highest priority after school and academic issues. Of the remaining nine, four stated these issues were among their organization's top three to five priorities, and five simply described them as a "high" priority.

Barriers

Participants identified many barriers to serving healthy foods and beverages in OST. In comments from participants representing 13 organizations, four themes related to program management emerged: food procurement, budget, staff issues, and facilities. Please note that these interviews predate the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which includes provisions to improve snack quality.

Procurement

How programs get their food is an important determinant of what they serve. Two main models emerged from the interviews. Some programs received snack foods through the school food service as part of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), while others purchased their own food. Of the programs purchasing food, some went shopping or took delivery from a food vendor. Some participated in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) for low-income communities, which reimburses programs for foods that meet CACFP guidelines.

Interviewees from seven organizations described benefits and challenges associated with each procurement model. Participants who described programs that get snacks from the school food service noted that the program, as a statewide nonprofit provider put it, "has no control over" what comes in. New menu guidelines could be particularly challenging for these programs to implement. One interviewee from a statewide nonprofit organization pointed out that programs can petition their local NSLP for different food items, "but most people don't want to take the initiative." Another interviewee, from a regional government agency, noted that school food service directors are required to keep costs down: "I think that sometimes their business is to ensure guidelines are met, but to do it as [inexpensively] as possible." Improving menus for OST programs that get their food from NSLP may require advocacy from OST to school food service and from school food service to vendors.

Programs that purchase their own food have more choice but may face difficulties with devoting staff time to shopping and with balancing cost and healthfulness. A participant from a national nonprofit organization that used menu guidelines said, "Many of the programs… struggled with the menu…. They ended up having to go on [big-box store] runs; it wasn't easy for them." Also, several participants described problems with access to healthy food. A regional service provider noted, "In low-income communities, a lot of the markets…don't have a spectrum of fresh fruits and vegetables." The absence of supermarkets providing fresh food at competitive prices affects not only the program's menu but also the choices available to participating families. An interviewee from another regional nonprofit organization described the difficulty of finding alternative vendors: "To get fresh fruits and vegetables delivered by a wholesale food center was very challenging.… I was turned down many times [but finally found someone]."

CACFP participants can receive reimbursement for snacks that meet a prescribed food pattern. Although interviewees viewed CACFP as an important resource, four identified problems with using it. Said a respondent from a regional government agency, "[We] never receive full reimbursement for what it costs…. We have to work

so stringently with the food service company to keep the cost down. The [CACFP] guidelines need to be adjusted or really re-evaluated." At the time of these interviews, reimbursement was capped at 74 cents per child per day. Two interviewees noted that CACFP paperwork was difficult for small programs to keep up with. One said that many OST providers don't know enough about CACFP and that it could help many more programs.

Budget

Interviewees from eleven organizations commented on the cost of healthful food. While one noted that many menu improvements can be made without more money, the other ten comments indicated strong concerns about costs. One provider's comment was typical: "You are going to get the cheapest thing you can get. If you don't have a whole lot of money, you're not going to spend a lot. Typically, if the kids don't take the fruits and vegetables, their shelf life isn't going to be very long." Additional empirical data are needed to address the widespread concern that healthful menus are more expensive than mixed- or low-quality menus.

> "You are going to get the cheapest thing you can get. If you don't have a whole lot of money, you're not going to spend a lot. Typically, if the kids don't take the fruits and vegetables, their shelf life isn't going to be very long."

Staff Issues

Five interviewees commented on staff issues. All agreed that program staff are responsible for actual implementation, so that their ability and motivation to carry out any menu policy changes requires careful consideration. Noting that staff turnover complicates improvement efforts, one interviewee from a national nonprofit organization said that programs need to "pay people what they deserve" in order to improve staff retention. This interviewee further commented that programs need "a combination of education, commitment, and dollars" as well as "holding up the examples that are successful and continuing to just pound away at it." Ongoing executive support and boosting nutrition knowledge and competency were also cited.

Facilities

Participants from three organizations voiced concern about access to kitchen facilities among OST programs in schools. Wholesome food is generally perishable.

Commented one respondent from a regional nonprofit organization, "The barrier…is very real. You need a partnership with [the school cafeteria] so they … have access to a refrigerator and running water." Programs that do not have shared-use agreements with schools may have difficulty including fresh fruits and vegetables in their menus. It is not clear how widespread this problem may be.

Standards and Guidelines

Participants from 12 organizations commented on our question on existing standards and whether new guidelines would improve OST food choices. Interviewees were familiar with prominent national guidelines. They specifically mentioned the two main USDA programs that influence snacks in OST: CACFP and NSLP. Further mention was made of the Institute of Medicine's recent nutrition guidelines for schools (Stallings, Suitor, & Taylor, 2010). Others discussed state licensing requirements and organization-specific standards. Several respondents were engaged in developing snack-menu guidelines for their own organization or public network.

Interviewees discussed benefits and potential pitfalls of having more rigorous and specific guidelines. Many respondents from a range of organizations supported the idea:

- "Policy is critical."
- "You do need the guidelines and toolkit as a start."
- "National, well-publicized [guidelines], with resources and training…would be really helpful."

One respondent working at the national level went further, stating that, "We need someone to write the national recommendation so that people like me can start putting it in…policy documents to make sure people realize [these are] the standards that they should be trying to achieve."

Two interviewees noted that programs are looking to the National Afterschool Association and the Council on Accreditation for leadership on guidelines. These two organizations provide the current voluntary and accreditation standards. In this form, expectations and infrastructure already exist.

Many interview participants cautioned that guidelines were not enough to change practices. In the words

of one individual with a national perspective, "Too often people just … give folks who are on the ground trying to do the work a piece of paper, and then they don't know what to do with it." Participants said that structures were needed to support implementation. A representative of a national advocacy organization said, "Without additional funding or training or resources or structure to help implement them, [guidelines] wouldn't really do much… without addressing the barriers." Another interviewee, who had coordinated a similar process through a state agency, noted the importance of building buy-in and consensus around new rules: "We needed a lot of input from providers … at all different levels to ensure that what we…put out was something that we could all work toward." This sentiment was echoed by a regional government agency leader, who said, "More rigorous and specific guidelines would not improve practices without support from the communities and the parents."

> "Educate, educate, educate… We must continue to train our food service staff to purchase, to prepare, to serve healthy foods."

Participants from three organizations commented on potential problems with more comprehensive guidelines. One person noted that vendors can charge high prices for healthful items. Another noted that mandatory nutrition standards could put programs serving needy children in a precarious situation if they lose funding due to poor compliance, which may itself reflect lack of funding, training, or opportunity: "You want to be real careful having these strict guidelines, because then you don't have money unless you follow them.… Having the guidelines and having people understand why they are important and then having the resources for them to implement them…[is] better". One respondent from a statewide advocacy group said plainly that "there is a real opposition to policy" in some circles, indicating that the very idea of regulating menus was objectionable to many.

Supports

Our final question was, "What supports—management, staffing, guidelines, communication, training, financial resources, other infrastructure—need to be in place or would have to change to support healthy eating practices?" Five organizations commented that programs need more money. Additional needs they identified were training, incentives, and accountability structures.

Training

Training was a persistent theme throughout the interviews. Participants said that training was necessary both to improve knowledge and to promote new skills. The director of services from a government agency said, "Educate, educate, educate… We must continue to train our food service staff to purchase, to prepare, to serve healthy foods." In all, six participants argued for more training to help with skills, motivation, and attitudes related to improving menu quality. Said one, "Training is key for staff to be comfortable." Several respondents advocated for ongoing as opposed to one-time training because of high staff turnover and because skill improvement can require mentoring over time. Noted a respondent from an organization with national scope, "Coaching, training, and mentoring really have to be restructured…to teach afterschool people how to do healthier things." A respondent from an organization working at the state level said, "It would be beneficial if you… had mentors to come out and assist [staff] and coach them along the way.… I think that if there was a train-the-trainer initiative… that might be very beneficial." One suggestion from a service provider was to ensure that training resulted in certification: "By having our staff obtain a fitness or nutrition certification, for example, we will also be gaining credibility in our programs." Another suggestion was to ensure continuity and persistence by addressing healthy eating at every staff meeting.

Incentives

Four comments mentioned incentives that would improve implementation. Three of these focused on incentives for programs, such as public recognition or use of a voluntary rating system. A regional service provider suggested developing incentives for vendors: "One of the major adjustments that would help is if the food service vending companies…could have some sort of incentive to provide healthier foods."

Accountability Structures

Several interviewees identified key accountability structures to ensure implementation. Respondents felt it was critical to monitor progress toward menu improvement. One person stated simply, "Checking for compliance is important." Seven responses referred to supervision,

data-based program monitoring, observational monitoring, mentoring, and transparency about progress among program staff and parents of students. One of these comments advocated use of continuous quality improvement methods to maintain progress.

Toward Healthier Food in OST

A vision for a healthier U.S. cannot be complete without OST programs. In this qualitative study, we spoke with key staff at regional, state, and national organizations that provide services to or conduct policy work with thousands of OST programs. While childhood obesity and healthy eating are high-priority concerns for these organizations, the transition to serving healthy snacks daily will require a number of inputs. We learned that, while budget was a concern, additional funding will not guarantee healthy menus. Having clear, consistent guidelines across organizations and across the country will help reduce confusion and focus efforts, but this too will not be enough. A major barrier is simply procuring healthier foods, whether through local markets, vendors, or school food service programs. Interviewees perceived CACFP, which supports healthy menus, as beneficial but offered caveats on its administrative burden and reimbursement levels. Respondents also made a strong case for ongoing, high-quality staff training. They

discussed the positive role of accountability structures and incentives, among other ideas, in promoting and sustaining improvement. Putting these pieces together requires skilled managers who can craft and sustain changes in procurement, preparation, storage, and budgeting. The emerging theme from these interviews was that healthy menu guidelines would be helpful but insufficient to trigger change.

Limitations of this qualitative study could be addressed through additional research. Observation and self-reports could assess actual menu quality and food service infrastructure in OST programs. We did not seek data on actual menus. In addition, we purposely did not define "healthy" menus, so we cannot assume that the term had identical connotations for all respondents. We felt these decisions were warranted because we were assessing perceptions of and attitudes toward the general idea of healthful diets and because of the complexity of introducing specific dietary standards during phone interviews. Another limitation is that members of our convenience sample, though it was crafted to include representatives of key OST organizations, may hold opinions that are not representative.

Despite these limitations, there are many important reasons to reflect on the readiness of OST leaders to improve menu quality. First, obesity prevention efforts, which

have largely taken place in schools during the school day, have produced only modest results, leading to new calls for research that includes community programs such as afterschool (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007; Whitlock, O'Connor, Williams, Beil, & Lutz, 2010). Second, the National Afterschool Association (NAA) recently adopted new voluntary quality standards for healthy eating and physical activity (NAA, 2011). With 7,000 members, NAA has potential to broadly influence children's diets if its standards can be widely disseminated and implemented. This effort would require support from advocates and service providers at many levels. Finally, recent Congressional reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act—the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010—strengthens CACFP and NSLP to promote OST snacks and meals that are fully aligned with the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. As with NAA's standards, the new law has potential for widespread impact on children's diets if successfully implemented. A first step toward promoting effective implementation is understanding the perceptions and concerns of leaders in the field. Subsequent steps must include building dissemination strategies that are responsive to those concerns and fostering supportive training and management practices that help OST programs become leaders in preventing childhood obesity. Careful evaluation of implementation efforts will assist in identifying approaches that warrant replication.

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dealing with behavior problems

The Use of Positive Behavior Support Strategies in Summer Programs

by Brian C. McKevitt, Jessica N. Dempsey, Jackie Ternus, and Mark D. Shriver

In recent years, positive behavior support (PBS) strategies have been promoted as alternatives to traditional discipline for children and youth (Lewis & Sugai, 1999). School use of PBS has been shown to significantly reduce the number of children referred to the office for discipline (Bohanon et al., 2006; Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, & Feinberg, 2005; McCurdy, Mannella, & Eldridge, 2003). It also allows administrators and teachers to regain time otherwise spent managing problem behaviors (Scott & Barrett, 2004).

Recently, PBS strategies have been applied outside the classroom in settings including playgrounds (Lewis, Colvin, & Sugai, 2000; Todd, Haugen, Anderson, & Spriggs, 2002) and summer recreation programs (Ternus, 2008). Though implementing traditional school-

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based PBS in out-of-school time (OST) programs may present challenges, PBS offers an appropriate alternative to punishment-based behavior management. Durlak and Weissberg (2007) found that afterschool programs that used evidence-based approaches to teaching social and behavioral skills had better student outcomes than did programs that did not use research-based strategies. PBS is a set of research-validated strategies for dealing with problem behaviors in a positive way (McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008). Our studies of PBS implementation in two community summer recreation programs suggest that PBS is a promising method for promoting desired behavior among children in OST programs.

Features of Positive Behavior Support

PBS typically comprises five core features, regardless of setting (Horner & Sugai, 2000; McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008; Office of Special Education Programs [OSEP], 2004):

- Creating common expectations
- Teaching these expectations to the children
- Acknowledging behavior that meets expectations
- Imposing consequences for behavior that does not meet expectations
- Collecting data on the PBS implementation and making decisions based on the data

Adults, perhaps in collaboration with participants, must decide on behaviors they will address and develop one simple set of rules that clearly communicates expectations, for example, "Be safe. Be kind. Be responsible." Expectations should be worded positively rather than negatively: "Be safe" rather than "Don't run." The universal expectations must be defined for each program location and then communicated to staff and participants. For example, in the hallway, "Be safe" means walking with hands to one's side, whereas running might be allowed on the playground. The expectations should be posted in several places throughout the site (McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008).

Direct instruction of expectations maximizes the effectiveness of PBS (McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008). Instruction should take place in the setting where participants are expected to follow specific rules; for example, adults would introduce gym behaviors while the group is in the gym. Staff should provide examples of desired and

undesirable behaviors and allow participants to practice the right way to behave.

Systems for acknowledging participants when they do what is expected may involve not only verbal praise but also tangible reinforcement such as tickets that participants can accumulate to earn rewards. Both group and individual conduct can be reinforced with rewards.

The PBS literature advocates for a clear and consistent process for addressing student behavior that does not meet expectations. Consequences for poor behavior must match the severity of the violation and should teach students how to avoid future violations. For example, if a child uses playground equipment unsafely, she would not be allowed to use the equipment the next day and would have to review and practice safety rules with an adult before being allowed to use the equipment again. This technique is in direct opposition to traditional punitive approaches that do not include an instructional component, including "zero tolerance" policies (Lewis-Palmer, Sugai, & Larson,1999). When behavior violations occur, staff should be consistent not only in imposing consequences but also in documenting the incident in order to enable the next step in the PBS process.

Data on student behavior allow staff to monitor the progress of PBS implementation and make decisions about its effectiveness (OSEP, 2004). Data collection may include tracking incident reports and discipline referrals (Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004) as well as attendance, suspensions, and expulsions. It might also include interviews with administrators, staff members, and children (Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, Todd, & Horner, 2001). Data should be analyzed and shared monthly or at least quarterly. Adjustments can be made to the way staff implement PBS as needed.

Implementing Positive Behavior Support in Afterschool Programs

Administrators who want to implement PBS can facilitate its success by:

- Establishing a leadership team
- Fostering staff buy-in
- Training staff
- Providing ongoing support

> This technique is in direct opposition to traditional punitive approaches that do not include an instructional component, including "zero tolerance" policies.

First, a core team must be organized to lead the PBS implementation (OSEP, 2004; Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, Horner, & Todd, 2005). The team must include not only frontline staff but also an administrator who can provide guidance and make decisions about such matters as scheduling, funding, and personnel. The leadership team ensures that program practices are aligned with PBS, thus creating a consistent system. The team should have planning meetings to prepare for PBS implementation and then meet regularly after implementation to ensure ongoing success.

The PBS leadership team must work to gain the support of the rest of the staff. A general rule of thumb is that 80 percent of program staff must buy in to PBS in order to bring about changes in children's behavior (McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008; Sugai et al., 2005).

All staff need to be trained in the core features of PBS. Training typically starts with the leadership team, whose members train the rest of the staff. Ideally the training would occur over several days, but the limited resources of most afterschool programs may mean that training has to be condensed. The trainer is usually a person with advanced knowledge of PBS, such as a coordinator from a local school or a university professor (McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008).

Once PBS is implemented, the leadership team must provide ongoing support and reinforcement to staff engaging in PBS practices (McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008). Just as the children get ongoing positive support for engaging in desired behaviors, so too should staff members. To ensure sustainability, PBS must become part of the culture of the program. PBS funding should be written into the program budget. Buy-in from other key players, such as parents and community partners, will also help to ensure ongoing support (Sugai et al., 2001).

Challenges with PBS in Afterschool Settings

Recent research (McKevitt & Dempsey, 2011; Ternus, 2008) has identified a number of unique challenges in implementing PBS in OST settings. Of primary concern are varying philosophies among staff about behavior management. PBS is rooted in a philosophy that includes positive reinforcement for engaging in desired behaviors. Some staff may not believe in rewarding children for doing what they are supposed to do, preferring instead to rely on more traditional punishment-oriented strategies (Maag, 2001). Ongoing conversations about the effectiveness of PBS—and the ineffectiveness of isolated punishment—in bringing about long-term behavior change can help staff understand this critical feature of PBS.

Afterschool programs tend to have high staff and child turnover (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007), which can be a challenge for PBS implementation. New staff may not have immediate access to training, and children may miss behavior instruction. However, PBS may mitigate some of these challenges by creating common ground where children know what to expect of staff, whether the staff members are novices or veterans.

Other issues with implementing PBS in afterschool settings include lack of funds, limited time with children, and the wide range of ages that a single program may serve. While these factors may cause difficulty, they are not insurmountable. An effective leadership team and dedicated staff can plan ways to deal with potential problems. For example, staff may solicit donations of rewards from local businesses rather than using program funds. Older children can stay interested and involved by teaching appropriate behaviors to younger children.

Successful implementation of PBS creates a positive afterschool culture for adults and children. To demonstrate the effectiveness of PBS in out-of-school settings, and to illustrate some of the challenges, we feature two case studies of community-based summer recreation programs.

Case Study #1

One summer program we studied took place in an elementary school in a large metropolitan school district in the Midwest. The program targeted girls ages 5–12 from low-income neighborhoods. The eight-week program met from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., five days a week, with a break between weeks 4 and 5. The girls were divided into three age-based groups for most activities: ages 5–8, 9–10, and 11–12. The girls participated in enrichment activities throughout the program, taking field trips and doing projects with area artists and chefs. The program had 32 girls and eight staff members: two full-time leaders and six temporary staff who were college students or school teachers.

> Ongoing conversations about the effectiveness of PBS—and the ineffectiveness of isolated punishment—in bringing about long-term behavior change can help staff understand this critical feature of PBS.

Methods

The study began before the start of the program with PBS training for staff members conducted by a member of the research team. An additional coaching session helped leaders and staff build fluency with PBS through practice and role playing.

The summer program's behavior expectation manual listed three universal rules: "Be safe. Be respectful. Be responsible." With youth participants' input, staff members further defined these expectations for specific areas of the school building. Two weeks after the program started, staff explicitly taught behavioral expectations by taking the group to each area of the school and discussing what the "3Bs" meant in each setting. A group of older participants made a video acting out examples of meeting and not meeting behavioral expectations and then showed the video to younger participants.

To provide tangible reinforcement for meeting behavioral expectations, staff members handed out "Camper Cash" at the end of each activity. Participants kept their Camper Cash slips in envelopes at their desks, saving up to redeem them for prizes such as a bracelet, packs of gum or candy, or coupons to local fast food restaurants at the end of the eight-week program. In order to receive Camper Cash, participants had to follow the 3Bs during each activity. Consequences for not meeting expectations consisted of time out from favorite activities and notification of parents.

One important tool for this study was the program's behavior incident log. Program staff tracked behavior that did not meet expectations by recording the date and time of the incident, the location, the activity the participants were doing at the time, a brief description of the behavior, and the expectation that was not met. We used this log to track the number of behavior problems and their most common types.

We also conducted direct observation of adult staff to track instances of positive reinforcement delivered to participants. We used a frequency count to record instances of social and tangible positive reinforcement for 20 minutes each day and then graphed the results. Reinforcement was defined as staff members recognizing a girl or girls for meeting expectations; examples include giving verbal praise, patting a girl on the back, or giving Camper Cash. Observations were conducted on 23 program days during different kinds of activities or during transitions between activities.

Our study included two phases. Phase 1 baseline data were collected during the first two weeks of the summer program, before PBS techniques were implemented.

During this phase, staff members followed the pattern of past summers, facilitating rule-making sessions with the participants and addressing behavior incidents by taking away swimming time at the end of the week and notifying parents. In Phase 1, each age group set its own set of rules, approximately 10 in all, including, for example, "No running," "No hitting," and "Listen to the staff." Rule violations were recorded in the behavior incident log. In Phase 1, rules were not systematically taught, a tangible reinforcement was not used, and consequences were not tied to the problem behavior.

Phase 2 began in the third week. Staff systematically taught participants the expectations, taking the whole group around to the gym, cafeteria, and so on, to discuss what the 3Bs meant in each area. Staff members also hung posters of the 3Bs in the cafeteria. Throughout Phase 2, staff members referred to the 3Bs when talking to girls about behavior violations. Camper Cash was the tangible reinforcement, and staff imposed immediate consequences on undesired behavior by removing the offender from the group activity for 10–20 minutes. Staff members continued to record behavior incidents in Phase 2 as they did in Phase 1. Phase 2 lasted through week 5. During the first five weeks, a member of the research team conducted direct observations three times weekly to measure instances of positive reinforcement.

During weeks 6–8, the program experienced unanticipated staff turnover, resulting in a shortage of adult staff and a lack of administrative support. As a result, the program was run differently, and the new staff members no longer used the behavior incident log. Therefore, data from the final three weeks of the program were not collected for this study.

Effects of PBS

According to the behavior incident log, the number of behavior incidents increased from the first week to the second and peaked during the third week when Phase 2 began, as shown in Figure 1. The number of incidents then decreased during weeks 4 and 5.

Instances of positive reinforcement, shown in Figure 2, increased during Phase 2 when PBS was implemented. The median number of instances of praise during a 20-minute observation during Phase 1 was 9, with a high of 19 and a low of 0. During Phase 2, the median was 10 with a high of 20 and a low of 0. While the differences in medians between Phase 1 and 2 are not all that meaningful, a visual inspection of Figure 2 shows decreasing positive reinforcement in Phase 1 and an increasing trend in Phase 2 as PBS was implemented.

The data indicate that PBS had a positive effect on program staff and participants. Phase 1 baseline data, when staff were not using PBS, show that instances of positive reinforcement decreased over time and the number of behavior incidents increased. In Phase 2, when PBS was being implemented, behavior incidents showed a downward trend after an initial increase, while positive reinforcement showed an upward trend. The finding that more problem behaviors were recorded at the beginning of Phase 2 is not surprising. Implementation of PBS includes data collection and aims to build consistency in how adults address behavior. An early increase in re-

Figure 1. Number of Behavior Incidents in Case Study #1
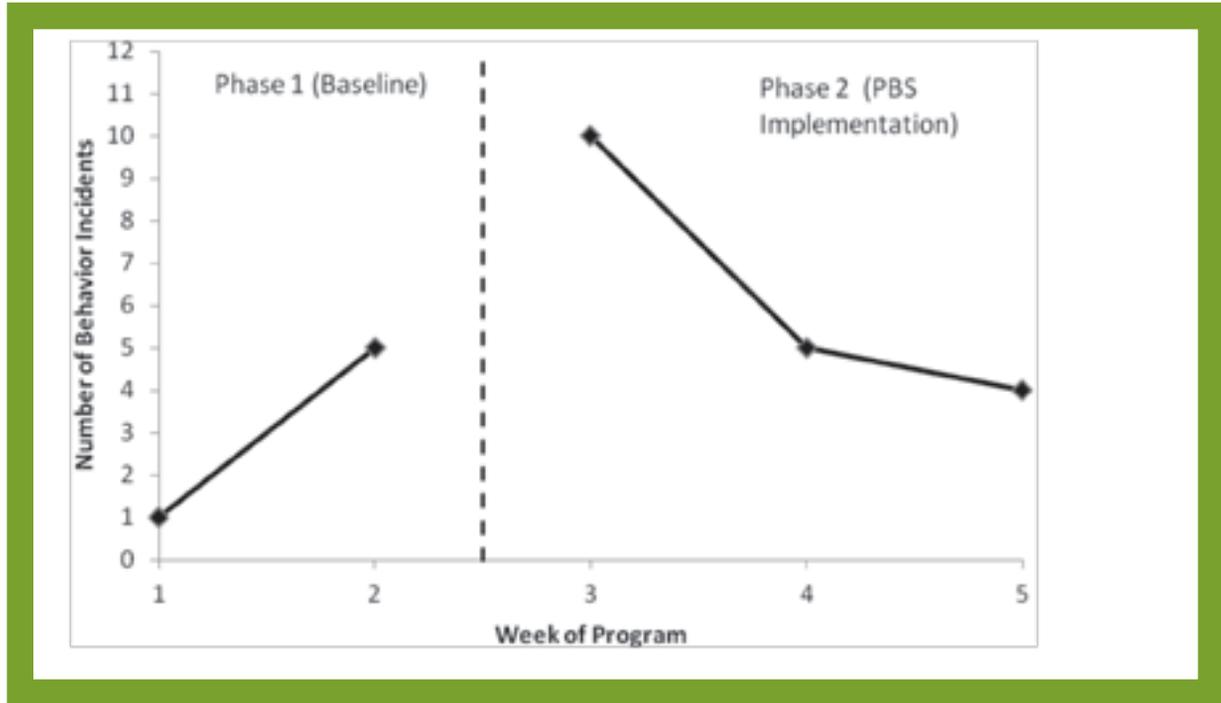

Figure 2. Instances of Positive Reinforcement in Case Study #1
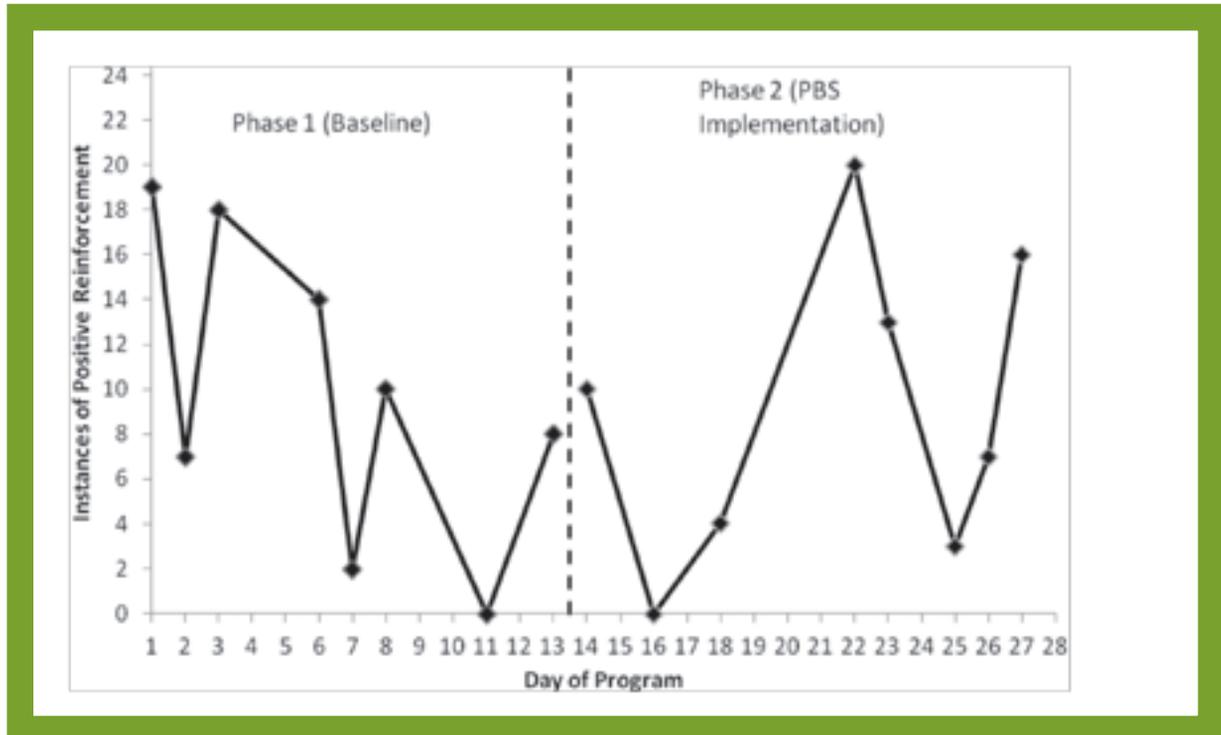
corded problem behaviors is typical because staff are paying closer attention to rule violations. The decline shown in Figure 1 is also typical.

This case study revealed several strengths and weaknesses of the PBS implementation in this summer program. One strength was that staff members designed and used an ongoing reward system. During Phase 2, staff members reported that they taught the 3Bs. Both staff members and participants knew the rules. This finding is supported by a decrease in problem behaviors. Staff members also frequently used positive reinforcement, creating a constructive climate in which children's appropriate behavior was fully acknowledged. Weaknesses in the staff's implementation of PBS are not reflected in the data because they were in areas of sustainability and policy. Staff did not develop a documented system for responding to behavior problems or monitoring PBS implementation. They did not use data to make decisions, and they did not have sufficient administrative support.

One limitation of this case study is the lack of data collection during the last three weeks of the program, after major staff turnover. While PBS typically provides consistency in such circumstances and can actually help to mitigate problems associated with staff turnover, in this case the turnover was so great that there was no one left who knew anything about PBS. The remaining adults did not use the behavior log. It would have been interesting to see if the effects of PBS had lasted without trained staff. The sustainability of PBS without supportive staff members is an area for future research.

An interesting finding in this case study is that the data from the actual implementation of PBS demonstrate higher levels of problem behavior than at baseline. As noted above, a spike in problem behavior when PBS is first implemented can generally be explained by the increased attention paid to problem behaviors. However, in this case, the level of problem behaviors decreased during implementation but never got as low as at program start.

Two phenomena could explain this apparent discrepancy. One explanation is that the girls had a "honeymoon" phase: their behavior was better when the program was new and they were trying to figure out how it worked. Once they were comfortable with the staff, they felt freer to misbehave. This phenomenon is well documented in the literature on behavior change (Alberto & Troutman, 2009). A second explanation is that the expectations and consequences the girls came up with in Phase 1 were simply more powerful than those the adults reinforced in Phase 2. In Phase 1, the girls set their own rules,

and the consequence for not following the rules was to miss a fun activity at the end of the week. The rules and consequences determined by the youth may have been more effective than those determined by adults. In fact, Brinker, Goldstein, and Tisak (2003) found that children prefer punitive consequences and often dole out harsher punishments than an adult would. This is an area for further research.

Case Study #2

More than 3,500 youth ages 6–15 participated in this summer community recreation program that took place across 27 parks in a large Midwestern city. The majority of the 100 staff members were of college age. The program was free to youth participants, most of whom came from low-income neighborhoods. Program activities included outdoor games and sports, board games, art projects, field trips, and swimming. The program took place five days a week from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

In the summer before our study, the program experienced a high degree of student expulsions because of problem behaviors. The program administrator sought help from a member of the research team. After several conversations about PBS, the administrator agreed to test the effects of PBS in three parks with the most problem behaviors. The administrator also agreed to hire a "behavior specialist," who travelled to all the parks to consult with staff members on youth behavior and individual problems.

Methods

At the beginning and end of the summer, all staff members completed an anonymous survey. An open-ended question on the pre-program survey, about how respondents expected to address problem behaviors, corresponded to a post-program question about how they actually did so. In addition, on the post-program survey, staff members were asked if they taught program rules and expectations at the beginning of the summer and reviewed them at least once more during the program.

Staff members completed the pre-program survey a week before the program began. During mandatory staff training, a member of the research team had an hour and a half to educate staff on PBS strategies. Staff from each park decided as a group on expectations, reinforcements, and consequences, sharing their decisions with the large group.

After the program began, the researcher traveled to all 27 parks to consult with staff on youth behavior, focusing particularly on the three target parks. The re-

searcher demonstrated appropriate use of reinforcement and consequences and led small groups of youth in addressing particular problem behaviors. The researcher conducted one-hour direct observations at each of the three parks during the first, fourth, and last weeks of the program. Both problem behaviors and positive statements by adult staff were recorded, with the intention of finding the relationship between the two. During the last week of the program, the post-assessment survey was distributed to all staff members, who were instructed to return it with their end-of-year paperwork.

Effects of PBS

Figure 3 displays the numbers of problem behaviors and positive statements observed in each park. At the beginning of the summer, Park 1 had the most problem behaviors, as had been the case the previous summer. During the program, problem behaviors declined, and positive statements were recorded for the first time during the final observation.

Results for the other two parks are less straightforward. Park 2 also began with a high number of problem behaviors. The mid-program assessment recorded a considerable drop in problem behaviors and an increase in positive staff statements. However, problem behaviors increased at the final assessment, though they were still considerably lower than at the beginning. Positive staff statements went back to zero.

Challenging behavior at Park 3 the previous summer had led to creation of the behavior specialist role and the hiring of new and

**Figure 3. Problem Behaviors and Positive Statements in Case Study #2**
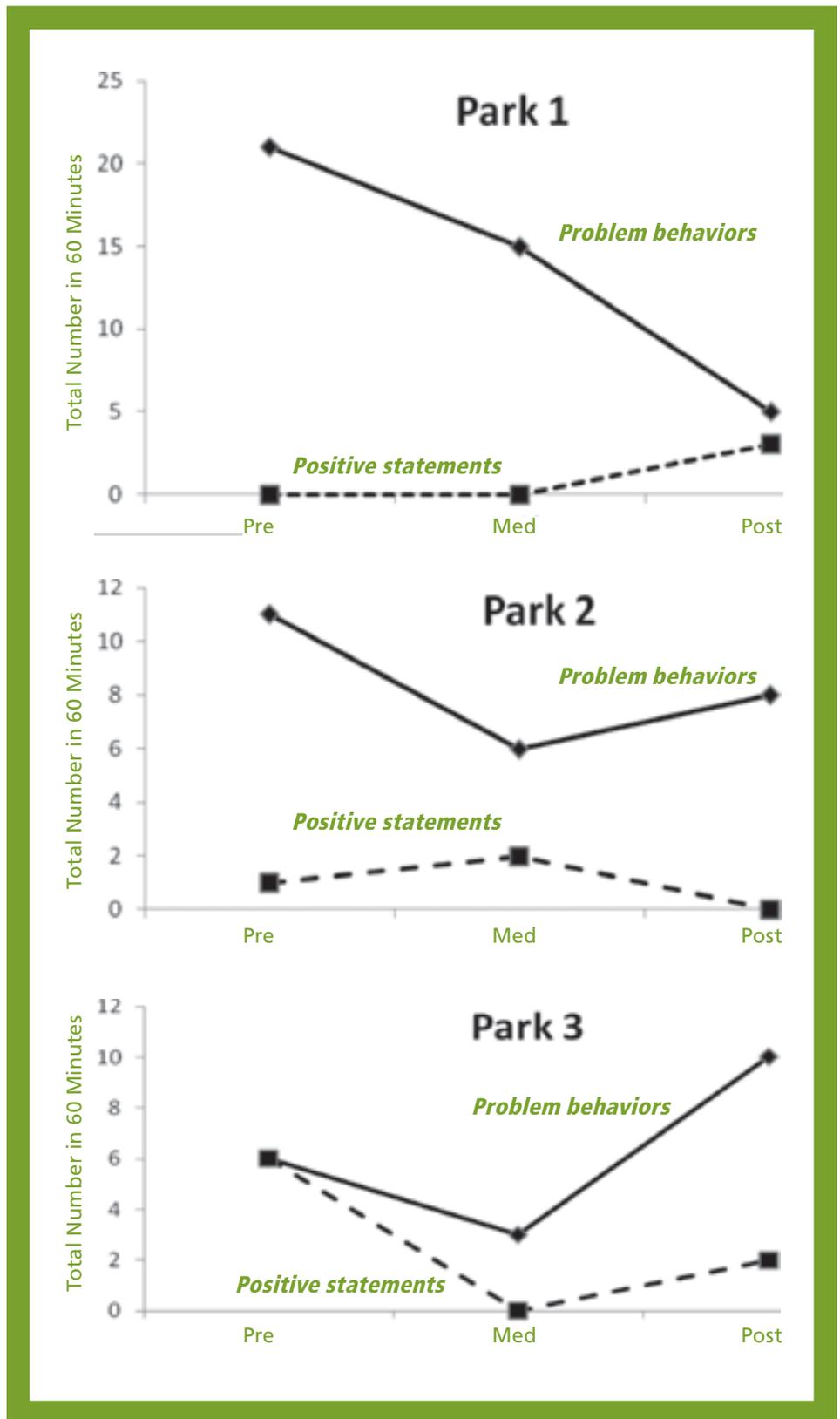
Table 1. Case Study #2 Pre- and Post-program Survey Results

STRATEGY	Percentage of surveys indicating use of the strategy	
	Pre-program (126 total responses)	Post-program (85 total responses)
Talk with the youth (with no further indication of the content of the discussion)	34.2	16.3
Give a time out/lose privileges	24.4	51
Call the youth's parents	19.5	14.3
Consult with a supervisor	13.4	4.1
Discuss with the youth specifically why the problem behavior was wrong	8.5	34.7
Suspend or expel	8.5	12.2
Discuss specific consequences with youth	7.3	4.1
Discuss the rules	7.3	10.2
Discuss appropriate ways to behave	6.1	4.1
Give a warning	4.9	18.4
Other/no response	19.6	4.1

Note. Percentages add to more than 100 percent because respondents could list more than one strategy.

enthusiastic staff. At the initial assessment, the number of problem behaviors was considerably lower than at the other two parks, and positive statements were high. At the mid-point observation, both problem behaviors and positive staff statements dropped. Staff were expressing feelings of burnout, and many youth had transferred to different parks. At the final assessment, problem behaviors nearly doubled and positive statements were halved compared to the initial observation. By this time, several staff members had left; substitute staff had not attended the original training. The lack of positive reinforcement may have contributed to the increase in problem behaviors.

In general, Figure 3 shows that, as positive statements increased, problem behaviors decreased, and vice versa. Even small changes in the frequency of positive statements appeared to have a significant effect on the

frequency of problem behaviors. Park 3 did not follow this trend, but its special challenges may have contributed to variations in behavior problems and positive statements observed.

Table 1 shows results from the pre- and post-program surveys. On the post-program survey, after being trained on appropriately addressing problem behaviors and consulting with the behavior specialist throughout the program, staff reported more concrete ways to address problem behaviors. Prior to training, most staff responded to the open-ended question that they would talk with the youth, give time-outs, call the youth's parents, or consult with a supervisor. When they responded that they would "talk with the youth," staff members did not indicate what the content of the discussions would be. By the end of the summer, more surveys included specific examples of

the content of conversations with youth, such as indicating why behaviors were problematic, giving warnings, and discussing rules. This change from a generic strategy of "talking with the youth" to more concrete discussions may indicate that staff had gained knowledge about communicating with youth. The fact that the strategy of consulting with a supervisor decreased may indicate that staff felt more competent to manage problem behaviors on their own. Reports of the use of time-outs or loss of privileges increased to 51 percent at the end of the program, perhaps indicating that staff members had more strategies in their toolkits as a result of PBS training.

Staff members were also asked whether they presented the behavior expectations at the beginning of the summer and if they reviewed them throughout. A positive finding was that 91.8 percent of staff members reported teaching the rules at the start of the summer and 91.1 percent reported that they reviewed them at least once. In a narrative response, one staff member said that problem behaviors continued at her park until the expectations were posted for all the youth to see.

The data show that PBS had varying effects on behavior in the three parks. More rigorous evaluation could better demonstrate what PBS has to offer OST programs in large, open settings such as city parks. Still, the data from observations and staff reports indicate many positive changes associated with the implementation of PBS.

Some of the strategies reported on the open-ended survey question about how staff responded to problem behaviors before and after the summer program may be unclear. Prior to the program, more staff reported they would "talk with the youth," while at the end of the program, more staff indicated they would discuss why the behaviors were wrong. This strategy may still be considered "talking with the youth." However, staff were more specific in the post-program survey about what their "talk" would entail. Future research could further examine changes related to specific adult-child interactions when PBS is being implemented.

A Promising Strategy

The implementation of PBS can have a positive impact on the behavior of youth participating in community OST programs. As shown by the two case studies, when PBS is implemented well—that is, when staff teach expectations and use ongoing reinforcement and positive statements—behavior problems decrease. The case studies also demonstrate that implementing PBS is difficult in these settings; staff turnover and lack of administrative leadership in particular can have undesirable consequences. Never-theless, PBS is a promising strategy for creating positive climates for youth-adult interactions in OST programs. When behavior is well managed, adults and youth can focus on spending high-quality afterschool time together.

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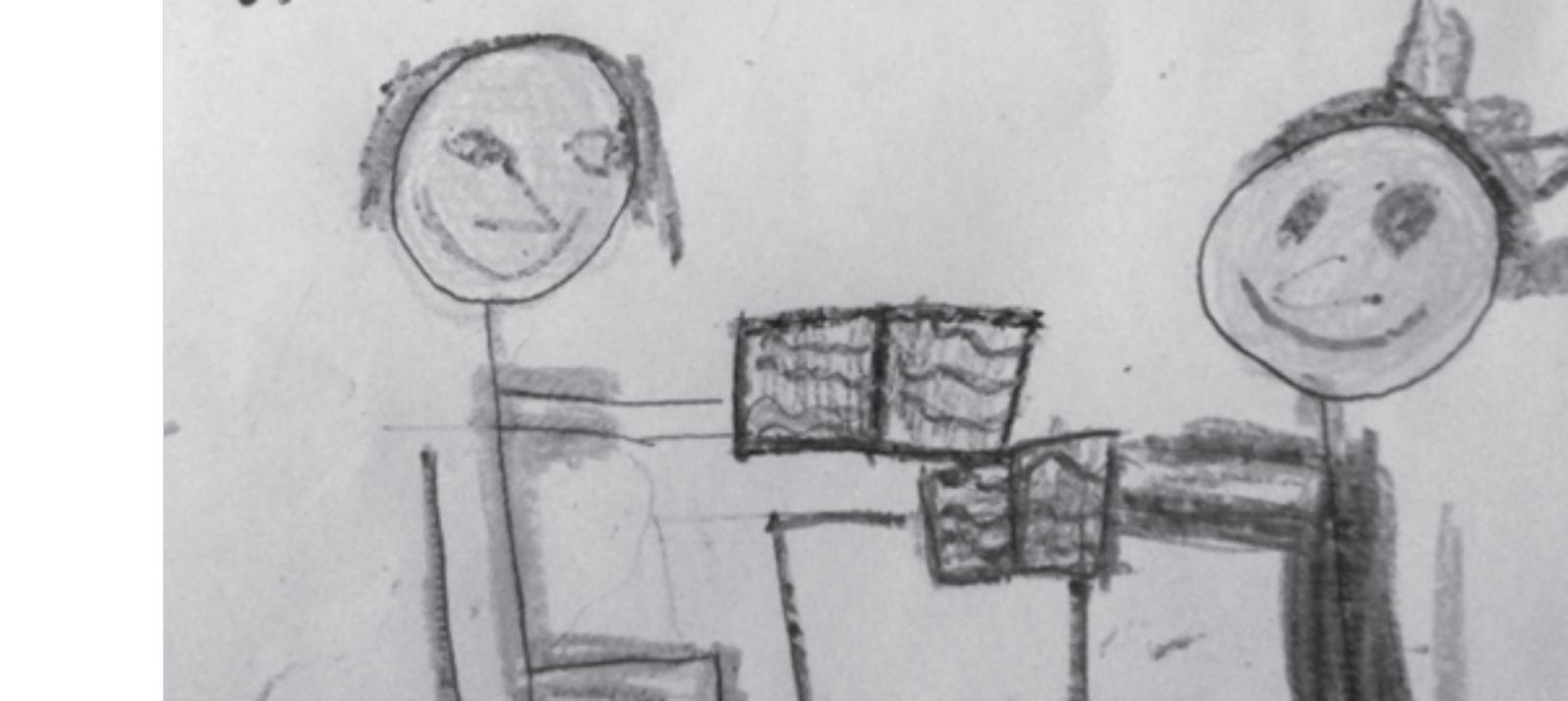
engaging library partners in 4-H programming

by Nia Imani Fields and Elizabeth Rafferty

When most people think about 4-H, they remember county fairs, livestock programs, and agricultural education. While these programs are still prominent, 4-H has grown in order to meet the growing demands of today's youth. The organization has expanded services and programs to serve rural, suburban, and urban youth in every state in the country.

4-H is uniquely positioned to apply youth development research, through non-formal education and technical assistance, directly from universities to local individuals, families, and communities. 4-H offers an array of research-based, experiential learning opportunities in science, citizenship, and healthy living, using various delivery modes. One of these, 4-H Afterschool, is growing in the University of Maryland Extension. 4-H Afterschool provides opportunities for youth to engage in positive youth development and to build life skills during the afterschool hours.

Similarly, when most people think of libraries, they think of checking out books. However, "[t]he public library can—and should—be a central hub for community life, not just a place to borrow books" (Bourke, 2007, p. 138). Though books and literacy programs are still at the forefront of the library's purpose, libraries also partner with local organizations to provide youth development programs. The Baltimore County Pub-

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lic Library system in Maryland hosts a large number of youth who frequent the library to use the computers and resources as well as to participate in ongoing youth programs. Parents view the library as a safe place for young people to meet during out-of-school time to engage in educational and youth development activities.

Baltimore County 4-H and the Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL) are thus natural partners in meeting the needs of youth after school. In Maryland in 2009, 37 percent of youth—up from 27 percent in 2004—said that they would participate in an afterschool program if one were available (Afterschool Alliance, 2009). Recognizing the need for quality youth development programming after school, Baltimore County 4-H and the BCPL forged a partnership to offer structured experiential programming opportunities to meet the afterschool needs of youth who visit their local library. This partnership is now in its fifth year, representing the longest continual relationship between BCPL and a youth-serving organization. Our experience suggests that libraries and youth development organizations can fruitfully collaborate to create sustainable quality afterschool programming that meets youth and community needs.

Youth Development in the Library

Libraries often partner with community agencies to foster youth development. Researchers note that, while libraries might want to provide youth development programs, their staff generally do not have the expertise and must look outside the library for help with this goal. Bourke (2005, 2007) and Burnett and Spelman (2011) have described library-community partnerships in Australia. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (2007) recommends that libraries partner with community agencies to fill in gaps in service. Bosma, Sieving, Ericson, Russ, Cavender, and Bonine (2010) outline elements necessary for successful inter-agency partnerships. In this article, we outline the specific methods used to sustain the partnership between the BCPL and the Baltimore County 4-H program, a kind of partnership tha can be replicated in other library environments.

Forging the Partnership

Afterschool programming in libraries reaches youth where they are. Youth come to the library because it is a safe place to be after school. They like to use the comput-

ers and resources and to participate in youth programs, if they exist. In addition, libraries are logical venues for afterschool programming because they have ongoing relationships with schools, home school groups, and community organizations. These relationships offer not only subject support, but also "industry knowledge, networks, funding," which are "absolutely invaluable" (Burnett & Spelman, 2011, p. 28). Library branches have the capability to advertise the program, for instance, in their countywide newsletter, on the library website, and through intercom announcements informing youth about afterschool program sessions. These benefits can be shared with program providers, leading to further program collaboration, joint marketing, community service opportunities, and access to additional funding streams—all adding up to sustainability.

In 2006, there was a recognized need to increase both the diversity of participation in Baltimore County 4-H and the variety of 4-H programming opportunities in Baltimore County's urban and underserved communities. In collaboration with other county extension educators, Baltimore County 4-H conducted an assessment of Baltimore County communities to identify the neighborhoods that most needed youth programming. Meanwhile, BCPL, experiencing an increase in teen users after school, was looking to provide pro-social, constructive activities for these young people. Using the youth development principle of viewing youth as resources rather than as problems or service recipients (Whitlock, 2004), BCPL conducted an afterschool needs survey of youth who were attending library branches. This survey of 122 youth ages 10–19 identified areas of interest to these youth (English, 2006). The top areas were finding a job, video games, computer games, and poetry.

Based on these and other community assessments, Baltimore County 4-H and BCPL established two pilot teen afterschool programs. The Rosedale and Randallstown libraries were chosen as the pilot sites because they had large numbers of teens present after school and high levels of support among library staff. The 4-H afterschool program 4 Youth, By Youth was launched in 2006 with the assistance of a $1,000 mini-grant from the Maryland 4-H Foundation. These funds covered program materials, curricula, and healthy snacks for the youth. Since the program's inception, additional grants were awarded by the Baltimore County Local Management Board (LMB), a county entity that fosters interagency coordination to

Afterschool programming in libraries reaches youth where they are.

address the well-being of children and families. The LMB provided $250,000 per year in the first two years and $147,000 in the third year to implement 4-H and other afterschool programs in BCPL. With a portion of these funds, a teen program assistant was hired and trained to implement 4-H and other youth programs in local libraries.

The afterschool program was broken into four program segments: workforce readiness, science, nutrition, and community engagement and leadership. Each two-month program segment was conducted during weekly or monthly sessions; the timing was largely dependent on funding and staffing. Over the years, 4 Youth, By Youth has been led by 4-H educators, trained library staff, volunteers, and college interns.

Sustainability through Collaboration

An identified program goal for both Baltimore County 4-H and BCPL was to strengthen and sustain community partnerships while offering quality afterschool programs in Baltimore County. Whitlock (2004) points out that youth development programming has to "accompany youth throughout their development to be effective" (p. 3). Creating developmentally attentive cultures through sustained and broad collaboration across all community sectors is what makes youth development powerful (Whitlock, 2004). Both partners realized that, if we worked together to combine program resources and strengths, the impact of our initiatives would be far greater than if we worked alone. What BCPL brings to the afterschool partnership is facilities, youth participants, and librarians. 4-H contributes research-based curricula, staff training, university 4-H educators, and additional resources from the University of Maryland. The benefits to the library are increased numbers of replicable, quality youth development programs in the branches; new potential young library patrons; and new funding sources. The 4-H program benefits by increasing the number of community partnerships and youth programs and by training additional youth development facilitators. Increasing the number of trained facilitators allows a 4-H program to multiply its efforts and reach a larger audience of young people.

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Strategies for Sustainability

Baltimore County 4-H and BCPL used several key strategies to promote sustainability:
- Clear and ongoing communication between partners
- A replicable program providing quality, research-based curriculum in areas identified by youth
- Ongoing training in 4-H strategies and content for program leaders
- Diverse funding streams

The partnership between Baltimore Country 4-H and the BCPL Youth Services division began with a statement of understanding that clearly communicated the partners' roles and responsibilities. This communication was further enhanced by quarterly meetings that focused on identifying program strengths, challenges, and future goals.

While the program has changed over the last four years to address current identified needs and interests of the youth, the use of experiential and research-based curricula—a hallmark of 4-H programming—has remained constant. 4-H offers an array of innovative materials for both youth and youth practitioners. These resources make the program adaptable to the needs and interests of youth in the community. The program can be replicated by any organization that has access to 4-H curricula and program materials as well as the interest of youth and of adult leaders, whether they are volunteers, college interns, or staff. 4-H curricula lend themselves to program replication because the experiential, research-based lessons follow a lesson plan model that almost any willing adult can easily facilitate after being trained by a 4-H educator or trained volunteer.

Training of Baltimore County librarians was an important component of our sustainable partnership. 4-H Youth Development offered training countywide as a means of increasing the interest of library branch staff in the afterschool program and then giving them the skills and knowledge they needed to lead a quality youth program. Training topics included:
- Trainees' work styles and how to fit into a team
- The power of youth development
- Afterschool program management
- Age-appropriate practices
- Guidance and discipline
- Teen leadership

Implementing this training helped library staff go from "being nervous participants to becoming in some cases passionately involved with young people in the collaborative development of library programs" (Burnett & Spelman, 2011, p. 28).

Like most ongoing programs, 4 Youth, By Youth had to adapt to changes in funding availability through the years. In addition to the Maryland 4-H Foundation grant and the LMB grant, we have asked library branches that want to continue the program to help support salaries for program facilitators.

Meeting the Library's Needs

Since the library and 4-H have different missions, the collaboration needed to emphasize similarities and to cope with differences through compromise. While the mission of 4-H is youth-focused, the library's scope is much larger; it provides materials, information, and services to community members of all ages. Therefore, though BCPL was a willing partner with 4-H in providing afterschool programming, the program needed to fit into the library's mission.

Three things that motivate libraries are "door count"—the number of people who walk in—materials circulation, and a quiet environment on the public floor. 4 Youth, By Youth was a natural supporter of these goals. An afterschool program, like other community programs held in the library, can encourage new users to come to the library and inspire current users to come in more often. Circulation was

encouraged when librarians would pull materials relating to the program's current subject matter for display. The issue of providing an environment conducive to reading and quiet study is problematic for many urban libraries, which are experiencing an influx of teens after school that is proving disruptive to normal library service. Providing structured programs in meeting rooms meets youths' need for a safe place to gather after school while engaging them in constructive activity off the main floor of the library. The afterschool program can also help teens to feel connected to their library, so they may be less disruptive during non-program times.

Outcomes and Impacts

The 4 Youth, By Youth afterschool program is the longest-running teen afterschool program in BCPL in the last 10 years. The goal was to reach an audience of 10–15 youth per site each year, a number that would allow us to keep a 1:15 adult-to-youth ratio. At the two program sites, the number of participants ages 11–18 has increased from 15 in 2006 to 21 in 2010. Similar program models have also been adapted with other Baltimore County 4-H partners to reach an additional 330 youth ages 8–18 in afterschool programs between 2006 and 2010. This program has contributed to the increased diversity of participants in Baltimore County 4-H, as shown in Table 1.

Through the years, data have been compiled from pre- and post-participation surveys, class observations, and end-of-class surveys. Table 2 highlights two key outcomes from 2006.

Table 1. Baltimore County 4-H Program Participants

RACE/ETHNICITY	BALTIMORE COUNTY 4-H MEMBERSHIP (2006)	BALTIMORE COUNTY 4-H MEMBERSHIP (2010)
White	96%	66.5%
African American	0.9%	27.5%
Asian	1.1%	2.7%
Native American	0.9%	0.6%
Pacific Islander	0.2%	0.1%
Hispanic	1.1%	1.5%

Source: Baltimore County 4-H Enrollment System (2006–2010)

Table 2. Youth Perception of Effects of 4 Youth, By Youth (n=13)

STATEMENTS		AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
I feel like I can make a difference in my community.	**PRE**	66%	17%	17%
	POST	78%	15%	7%
I am aware of community resources, and I can utilize them.	**PRE**	82%	9%	9%
	POST	93%	0%	7%

After the first year of programming, the 4-H educator realized that surveys at the beginning and end of the program year were difficult to synthesize because participation fluctuated and new teens began to attend throughout the program year. The evaluation was then changed to survey participants at the beginning and end of program segments. End-of-program-segment surveys between 2008 and 2010 showed that youth reported increased knowledge in workforce readiness, science, nutrition, community engagement, and leadership.

The program has been well received by youth, parents, and library staff. In a project in which youth developed promotional tools for the 4-H afterschool program, one teen wrote, "Learn healthy snack recipes such as an egg sandwich and burritos. You'll even prepare it and try it!" Another said that "4-H was really great this year. We learned about inventors of safety devices, science experiments, and communication." A librarian who facilitated the 4 Youth, By Youth program shared her view:

> It is clear that the youth benefit just from having an adult they can relax with and sort of "check in" with each week. Housing the program at the library is also a great way for the teens to connect with the library staff!

Library branches are often eager to replicate successful programs held at another library branch. The 4 Youth, By Youth 4-H afterschool program has most recently been replicated in the Arbutus branch in Baltimore County for the 2010–2011 school year. In addition to increased participation in the library 4-H afterschool program, we have seen increased interest and participation in youth development training from library staff throughout central Maryland and from community partners such as Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Central Maryland. In 2009, the 4-H educator successfully

trained 29 Central Maryland librarians representing 4,030 library youth. The goals were to provide youth development training to librarians that would enhance current youth programs being held in the branches, to provide resources that would allow librarians to better serve youth who visit the branch, and possibly to spark interest in expanding the 4-H program in the county. Evaluations showed that librarians perceived an improvement in their knowledge of program management. Specifically, they enhanced their skills in the areas of positive youth development, age-appropriate practices, positive guidance and discipline, parents as partners, and leadership. They also increased their awareness of ways to communicate with young people and learned how to establish a youth program in a library branch.

Lessons Learned

In the course of providing a successful program, we learned some lessons about teen afterschool programming. When we had to cut back from weekly to monthly offerings during a low budget cycle, we learned that monthly programming can work, but weekly is more effective. We also learned that teens typically lost focus after 90 minutes of learning. Outreach efforts increased the chances of steady attendance throughout the year. We used e-mails, on-site signage, and reminder calls to keep youth coming. Most importantly, it has been crucial to remain current to meet the growing and changing needs and interests of our youth.

In addition to lessons related to programming, we have also learned about sustaining our partnership. Library staff who are not directly involved in the 4-H afterschool program need to be able to encourage young patrons to attend the program during their regular interactions with the youth. To that end, BCPL informs each participating branch about the program by conducting meetings and

providing a fact sheet along with 4-H registration information. Furthermore, though each librarian is equipped to encourage participation in the 4-H program, the BCPL Youth Services department has also identified a liaison for each branch who communicates directly with the 4-H educator and BCPL Youth Services. This system has enhanced communication about the 4-H program in the branches.

Perhaps the greatest lesson we learned is that youth programs are continually evolving and thus need to be flexible—and not only in terms of programming. Library-based youth development programs also need to be able to adapt to changes in funding, staffing, research, youth interests, and community needs.

Making Collaboration Work

Providing sustainable quality afterschool programs that meet youth and community needs requires a collaborative effort. Baltimore County 4-H and BCPL have successfully forged a lasting partnership to engage and develop youth in Baltimore County urban communities. Our example demonstrates the importance of youth voice and of responding to current community needs.

A number of key strategies can make this kind of partnership successful. Any youth development organization interested in working with a library partner would need to attend, as did Baltimore County 4-H, to assessment and planning, quality youth development training for facilitators, participant recruitment, quality programming delivery, the sustainability of the partnership, and evaluation (Fields, 2011). Additional recommendations for implementing 4 Youth, By Youth in a local library system are to:

- Reach out to the library's youth services department or its equivalent to identify common goals and mutually beneficial methods of reaching youth in the local library
- Identify multiple funding sources to support the program through the local management board, the state 4-H foundation, local businesses, or other grant opportunities
- Identify key players and volunteers in the library and community who can serve as advocates for the program and as links between 4-H and the library
- Market the youth program in the library, in the 4-H community, and in local neighborhoods
- Continue to assess and adapt the program to meet the changing needs of the youth and the community

Though quality afterschool programs vary in structure and content, the overall goal is the same: to provide safe environments where youth can engage in learning and develop their life skills to become competent, caring, and contributing adults in their community. The 4 Youth, By Youth 4-H afterschool program provides that opportunity in the Baltimore County Public Library.

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empowering youth work supervisors

with Action Research Strategies

by Margo Herman

Supervising youth workers is a challenging, demanding job in a complex field. Too frequently youth workers get mired in reacting to the everyday crises that dominate their work, finding it difficult to rise above the daily demands to reach a place where reflection can help guide their work. Strategies based in action research can empower youth work supervisors to invest in their own growth and in the continuous improvement of their programs.

The strategies proposed in this article were crafted as my project in the Afterschool Matters (ASM) Practitioner Fellowship in Minnesota, 2009–2010. These strategies fit with the goal of the ASM Fellowships, which support out-of-school time practitioners to study effective practices and share program improvement strategies (Hill, Matloff-Nieves, & Townsend, 2009). Grounded in action research and qualitative data analysis, the strategies are designed to encourage a proactive and reflective approach to supervising youth workers.

Action research is a kind of inquiry typically conducted by practitioners rather than professional researchers. It is a form of professional development in which ordinary practitioners investigate and evaluate their own practice by raising significant questions in order to find ways to improve a situation. More and more practitioners are investigating collaborative work and making their stories public in order to strengthen understanding about the field (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006). Youth work supervisors can use action research to capture stories, enable their supervisees to share experiences, and facilitate problem solving.

One method of capturing stories and experiences is qualitative data analysis. Qualitative data often come

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from fieldwork, and the analysis is distinctly non-statistical. Qualitative researchers make firsthand observations of activities and interactions, sometimes engaging personally in those activities as "participant observers." They collect extensive data from multiple sources such as observations, interviews, and document reviews; they then organize and translate the results into a readable narrative with themes, categories, and case examples (Patton, 1990). When qualitative data are used in action research, youth workers' stories become powerful tools for personal and program improvement.

Though some youth workers have been using action research in their practice, few action research projects have been specifically directed at youth work supervision. This article presents a sequence of strategies for using action research in youth work supervision (see box). My priority in designing the strategies was to encourage and empower a reflective and participatory culture, based in action research, for youth work supervisors.

The strategies can be pursued within the action-reflection cycle illustrated in Figure 1 (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006). This cycle can serve as a framework for continuous improvement as youth work supervisors engage with staff to investigate and evaluate specific issues and then to create and modify new actions based on ideas identified through the five strategies. The potential of action research becomes real when issues are linked with action and people give meaning to the action (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006). The five suggested strategies can be viewed sequentially and in tandem with the action-reflection cycle, which provides a model for using the data gathered to move in new directions.

Figure 1. The Action-Reflection Cycle

Implementing the Five Strategies to Improve Supervisory Practice

Strategy 1. Analyze Youth Work Outside Your Organization

The first strategy is to analyze youth work practice outside one's own organization by reading field research, seeking practitioner stories, and connecting with a peer network. Discovering research and practitioner stories from the field of youth development can foster ideas that elevate a supervisor's viewpoint above the day-to-day busywork. The knowledge of novices and experts, academics and practitioners can be combined to inform youth work practice (Cochrane-Smith & Lytle, 2001).

A number of journals and newsletters feature practice stories from youth work organizations—stories that can deepen supervisors' expertise in youth work practice. For example, "Shining a Light on Supervision" from the Forum for Youth Investment (Wilson-Ahlstrom, Yohalem, & Craig, 2010) features exemplary

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SUGGESTED STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE SUPERVISION PRACTICE IN YOUTH WORK ORGANIZATIONS

Strategy 1. Analyze youth work practice outside your organization by reading field research, seeking practitioner stories, and connecting with a peer network.

Strategy 2. Learn and apply qualitative data analysis and action research tools, collecting data by intentionally observing staff over time and by interviewing staff to enhance understanding of the dilemmas and tensions they experience.

Strategy 3. Identify themes and reflect on the issues that emerge from strategies 1 and 2 to illuminate issues to be addressed with staff.

Strategy 4. Incorporate the issues identified in strategy 3 into internal staff development interactions such as staff meetings, one-on-one meetings, or learning circles.

Strategy 5. Coach and mentor staff on the themes, dilemmas, and issues that emerge in strategy 3.

youth work supervision practices. The article says that satisfied youth workers, in contrast to their dissatisfied peers, were more likely to report getting the supervisor feedback they needed to do their job. "Some differences in practice may come down to whether someone is fortunate to have a good supervisor" (Wilson-Ahlstrom et al., 2010, p. 2). Examples of specific types of staff meetings and interactions with frontline workers are included in the article to help define exemplary youth work supervision.

Other youth work resources focused on sharing practitioner stories are available from the Forum for Youth Investment Ready by 21, Harvard Family Research Project, National Institute on Out-of-School Time, University of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development, the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition, and other national and local organizations. All of these organizations are easily found on the web; many offer email updates by subscription. Many also offer webinars, an additional option for tapping into practitioner expertise and stories.

As I pursued my action research project to develop the five strategies, journal articles from the Forum for Youth Investment were instrumental in shaping and validating the concepts. I also consulted chapters from works by McNiff and Whitehead (2006), Hubbard and Power (1991), Patton (1982, 1990) and Ryan and Bernard (1985).

I was also helped by consultations with youth work supervisors and peer participants in the ASM Fellowship. Peer networks are another powerful way to empower youth work supervisors through shared learning. If no network already exists, youth work supervisors can take the initiative to convene, say, a quarterly meeting over coffee to share stories and discuss challenging situations.

Strategy 2. Learn Qualitative and Action Research Tools

The second strategy is to learn and apply qualitative analysis and action research inquiry tools. The field of youth work, like other professions, is finding value in qualitative data drawn from fieldwork. Qualitative data can be helpful in creating new action strategies to enhance quality; the data connect research with practice and vice versa. Qualitative methods encourage gathering data from multiple sources including open-ended interviews and direct observation. Qualitative data can also come from practitioners' own fieldwork (Patton, 1990). Additional data can be collected to enhance the interviews and observations, such as e-mail notes, assessment data, photos—any variety of supporting information.

Interviewing provides an effective way of changing practice problems into evolving questions for action research. How inteview questions are asked determines the quality of answers, so the skill of interviewing to gather meaningful insights rather than predetermined responses is worth refining. The questions that lead to further pondering about an issue or dilemma are like a "grow light" for new thinking (Hubbard & Power, 1991). Michael Quinn Patton's book *Practical Evaluation* (1982) includes a chapter on thoughtful interviewing, which describes a variety of types of interviews, provides specific interviewing strategies, and suggests how to word questions. Interviewing staff about how they regard their work— noting how they describe difficulties and tensions—can provide essential insight into staff and supervision issues. A good interview can increase the base of understanding between supervisor and staff (Hubbard & Power, 1991).

Observing staff can be as simple as briefly recording interactions and conversations between staff and youth, noting tensions, difficulties, and dilemmas that surface. The observations can be recorded casually and unobtrusively; it takes only a few minutes to jot notes that include facts as well as assumptions and opinions. The notes will be collected for use in strategy 3 and may be shared with staff in strategy 4.

Action research in the ASM Fellowship required observations and interviews. My research included a set of observations of staff and supervisors at a local Boys & Girls Club, in which I collected information and noted my opinions about interactions between staff and supervisors. Then I interviewed supervisory staff in this and other programs, asking about the skills and perspectives that make the biggest difference to new managers. The readings assigned to us in the ASM Fellowship about how to interview and how to record observations (Hubbard & Power, 1991; Patton, 1982) were invaluable.

> The questions that lead to further pondering about an issue or dilemma are like a "grow light" for new thinking.

Youth work supervisors who set aside 15–25 minutes twice a week to record quick entries would, over the course of six months, acquire a substantial amount of data. At this point, building the collection of observations and interviews is more important than analyzing the data, which is the task of strategy 3. When these data are placed in the action-reflection cycle (Figure 1), they set the stage for supervisors to reflect on the issues identified and consider how to craft new actions to address them. Looking back at observation and interview notes collected over an extended period of time helps to illuminate issues and dilemmas.

Strategy 3. Identify Themes and Reflect on Issues

The third strategy involves identifying themes and reflecting on the issues that emerge from strategies 1 and 2 in order to find the issues to raise with staff in strategy 4.

Strategies 1 and 2 will result in the collection of a great deal of data. Strategy 3 is the time to stand back and take the view from the balcony above the dance floor of daily activity, watching for patterns and checking interpretations (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009).

Strategy 3 starts with collecting all the data notes and spreading them out on a table. Supervisors begin to make sense of the data by reviewing the collection, searching for similarities, differences, and repetitions. Ryan and Bernard (1985) suggest marking different themes with different colored pens to begin analyzing the content. The voluminous raw data can be organized into color-coded groupings with major themes, categories, and illustrative case examples extracted through content analysis, as described by Patton (1990). This process is like interviewing the data—asking what goes together, organizing color-coded note cards to identify where questions emerge, and looking for commonalities and interpretations.

As our ASM Fellowship cohort gathered and interpreted our qualitative data, we learned that everything is potentially data. The data I collected on supervision practices included not only notes on interviews with supervisors and on observations of staff-youth interactions, but also notes on self-reflections, research by others in the field, notes from focus groups,

and workshop evaluation comments. Other types of data for other fellowship projects included transcripts, case studies, journal entries, phone conversation notes, e-mails, texts, performance evaluations, student work, assessment results, and photos. Many sources can be considered qualitative data.

I transferred the data I collected through observations and interviews at the Boys & Girls Club onto note cards that I could shuffle around and color-code into themes, re-arranging the groupings to see where the data suggested an interpretation. This collating and theme-building process took a block of time, but when I laid out all the data and started color-coding common ideas, within an hour I experienced an "aha" moment as themes emerged. The specific themes that emerged from my data were:

- There is value in having a network of peers in youth work supervision.
- The shortage of resources in youth work has a significant impact on staff.
- Youth work supervisors play a critical role in supporting staff, enhancing their ownership and loyalty, and ensuring that their work has an impact.

These themes informed the development of my action research strategies for youth work supervisors. When the results of the qualitative data analysis are put in the action-reflection cycle (Figure 1), continuous improvement begins. Reflecting on the observations can lead to new actions and directions.

Strategy 4. Take the Issues to the Staff

In strategy 4, supervisors incorporate the issues identified in strategy 3 into internal staff development interactions such as staff meetings, one-on-one meetings, or learning circles. Sharing the themes that emerged from observations and interviews with staff opens the door for interactions that set new directions.

If the current staff meeting structure allows for professional development, supervisors could share practical issues that were illuminated by the qualitative data, working with staff to wrestle with those issues. This work can lead to new ideas for practice in the organization. If staff meetings do not include professional development time, supervisors might add time or consider a new vehicle, perhaps based on an idea from one of the

> Sharing the themes that emerged from observations and interviews with staff opens the door for interactions that set new directions.

outside resources discovered in strategy 1. Though time and money will always be short, this approach has the potential to involve staff in creating solutions to common issues.

For my purposes, I used strategy 4 to incorporate my data into a workshop curriculum for the University of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development. The workshop, Leadership Matters, provides a wide variety of resources for youth work supervisors, a small part of which includes the five suggested strategies and the action-reflection cycle.

Youth work supervisors can reflect on which staff-supervisor interactions will encourage staff to think broadly, reflectively, and strategically about program issues. The interaction can enhance rapport between supervisors and staff. Supervisors can show staff how the action-reflection cycle helps the group identify new strategies. Staff members can try it out, setting new directions, observing and evaluating the changes, and then modifying the approach based on what they learn. Optimism about supervisors' willingness to try new approaches based on qualitative data may be a key to increased staff engagement.

Strategy 5. Coach and Mentor Staff

Strategy 5 involves coaching and mentoring staff about the themes, dilemmas, and issues that emerge in strategy 3. Staff members need to learn why, when, and how to implement the new directions they identified in strategy 4. Supervisors focused on developing staff maximize talents and resources, build power by sharing power, coach and mentor to create power in others and to increase the leadership capacity of the whole group, and build confidence by setting goals and providing performance feedback (Turning Point Program, 2006).

This perspective can help supervisors engage with staff to patiently and reflectively guide the action-reflection cycle through implementation and then evaluation. Modifications to new directions will emerge, perpetuating the action-reflection cycle. During this process, supervisors' accessibility will affect employee satisfaction (Bryant, 2011), a necessary ingredient in the ability to implement new ideas.

Supervisors who explore a variety of ways to support and mentor staff are likely to more fully engage staff in crafting new directions. The range of internal professional development opportunities includes "on-going informal resources such as newsletters, on-line discussion boards, and 'brown bag' lunches for staff members to share ideas and expertise" (Bowie & Bronte-Tinkew,

2006, p. 1). Developing staff involves bringing out the best in others (Turning Point Program, 2006). Supervisors who take a coaching and mentoring role will ensure that the suggested strategies and the action-reflection cycle are meaningful to staff in their particular work environment.

One of the youth work supervisors I interviewed in developing these strategies said that she started viewing herself as a coach and mentor rather than strictly as a supervisor focused on corrective action. She began to explore resources that would help her learn how to coach and mentor staff; more importantly, she shifted her expectations to model reflective practice herself and to become more accessible to staff. A focus on developing strengths and talents, as well as providing opportunities for staff to engage in the process, are key.

Action Research as a Tool for Organizational Improvement

These suggested strategies are intended to empower youth work supervisors to try some concrete tools. They encourage a strategic, reflective, and proactive approach to supervision. Though time and resources are undoubtedly short, making action research part of organizational practice has powerful potential for continuous improvement. Not only will supervisors improve their own practice, but they will also engage in meaningful analysis of their organization. Staff will become an integral part of solutions to complex problems. As issues are illuminated and addressed over time, the long-term implications for the organization are significant. The return on investment will be realized several times over in staff satisfaction and staff retention.

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a new approach to accountability

Creating Effective Learning Environments for Programs

by Wendy Surr

Nearly 20 years into the era of results-based accountability, a new generation of afterschool accountability systems is emerging. Rather than aiming to test whether programs have produced desired youth outcomes, an increasing number of afterschool funders and sponsors are shaping more flexible, collaborative, and lower-stakes accountability systems.

Could they do even more? By designing accountability systems that fully embrace the notion of afterschool programs *as learning organizations* and by using research from organizational development, education, and youth development to create effective learning environments, funders and sponsors can help programs to improve quality—and therefore, to succeed in their goal of achieving better outcomes for young people.

Accountability in the Age of Outcomes

The 1990s, a time of national investment in afterschool, were also a time of increasing accountability. Passage of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 ushered in a new era of *results-based accountability* (Office of Management and Budget, 1993). Programs could no longer count delivery of services as evidence of dollars well spent; funders expected to see measurable youth outcomes (Fuhrman, 1999; Kane, 2004; Walker & Grossman, 1999). These outcomes were driven not by the goals of afterschool programs but by the interests of constituent groups that were looking to afterschool to solve societal ills ranging from poor academic

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performance to juvenile delinquency (Halpern, 2005). To ensure the value of their investments, many funders created accountability systems to test whether programs were producing the desired youth outcomes.

Eager for new private and public dollars, many afterschool programs began collecting data on youth's standardized test scores, grades, school attendance, and delinquency records, even when these outcomes didn't align with what programs were trying to accomplish. As large cities expanded the numbers of afterschool slots and sites, compliance led to creation of large-scale data management systems, new technologies such as swipe cards, and new mechanisms for gaining access to public school records. Some afterschool programs created administrative positions dedicated solely to managing youth outcome data (Fiester, 2004).

Just a few years into the outcomes accountability era, warning signals emerged. Researchers questioned whether the outcomes chosen by funders were appropriate, realistic, or even desirable goals for afterschool programs. Some expressed concern that funders hadn't acknowledged the supports programs would need to yield the results funders were looking for (Walker & Grossman, 1999). Others argued that outcomes measurement offered an opportunity for programs to focus on learning and improvement toward outcomes that were meaningful to their mission (Schilder, Horsch, Little, Brady, & Riel, 1998; Surr, 2000). Despite these reactions, youth outcomes—with an increasingly academic focus—remained a key focus for many accountability systems. When funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) was included in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, afterschool programs became even more explicitly focused on helping at-risk youth achieve school success.

In his paper *Confronting the Big Lie* (2005), Robert Halpern railed against the trend toward an academic focus in afterschool programs. Citing the 2004 evaluation of 21st CCLC (Dynarski et al., 2004), which failed to show academic effects for participating youth, Halpern argued that schools, not afterschool programs, should be accountable for academic outcomes. Forcing programs

> For many funders, results-based accountability has fallen short of hopes. Much of the research conducted in the late 1990s and early 2000s with the aim of showing the impact of afterschool participation on academic achievement, particularly standardized test scores, did not meet stakeholder expectations.

to focus on academic outcomes sidetracked them from their true purpose: to support the healthy development of individual children and youth (Halpern, 2005). Similarly, an article released by the California Committee on Afterschool Accountability argued that afterschool programs should be valued as "unique institutions" (Piha, 2006, p. 8) supporting healthy youth development and a wide range of learning goals.

For many funders, results-based accountability has fallen short of hopes. Much of the research conducted in the late 1990s and early 2000s with the aim of showing the impact of afterschool participation on academic achievement, particularly standardized test scores, did not meet stakeholder expectations (Bodily & Beckett, 2005; Dynarski et al., 2004; James-Burdumy et al., 2005; Kane, 2004). As researchers began to explore more deeply the relationship between program quality and youth outcomes (Birmingham, Pechman, Russell, & Mielke, 2005; Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Grossman, Campbell, & Raley, 2007; Miller, 2005; Raley, Grossman, & Walker, 2005; Scales et al., 2003), their results supported what many in the afterschool field already believed: that quality is essential to outcomes.

A New Generation of Accountability Systems

As a result of the growing consensus that program quality is essential to positive youth outcomes, the afterschool field has renewed its focus on how best to improve quality (Granger, Durlak, Yohalem, & Reisner, 2007; Stonehill & Little, 2008). Rather than testing whether programs have produced youth outcomes, an increasing number of afterschool funders are shaping flexible, collaborative accountability systems designed to help programs measure a range of early and intermediate outcomes that are better aligned with program goals and to strive for higher program quality.

A key feature of these new lower-stakes accountability systems is a subtle but significant shift from viewing program improvement as an "add-on" to expecting programs to engage in self-assessment and to report on continuous improvement efforts. Though producing better youth outcomes remains a priority, funders using these new ac-

countability systems recognize that program quality and efforts to improve it are the essential means to achieving this goal. Many public and private funders are now integrating self-assessment into their accountability requirements. State-administered 21st CCLC programs provide some of the most compelling examples of this shift.

- In Massachusetts, 21st CCLC grantees are required to engage in continuous program improvement using the Afterschool Program Assessment System (APAS), an integrated set of quality and outcome tools developed in partnership with the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST). Grantees are required to share what they are learning from their APAS data. They must report on how they are using their data to guide program improvement and to increase their capacity to produce 21st century skills in youth (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2011).

- The Michigan Department of Education 21st CCLC program uses a "low stakes accountability and improvement system" (Smith, 2005, p. 5) developed in collaboration with the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. Programs are expected to use the Youth Program Quality Assessment for self-assessment and to demonstrate that they are using data-driven improvement plans and engaging in organizational learning.

- 21st CCLC grantees in Rhode Island are required to engage in continuous improvement using a customized version of the High/Scope assessment tool (Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2006).

- New York requires 21st CCLC grantees to use the New York State Afterschool Network's Program Quality Self-Assessment twice a year for planning and ongoing program improvement (New York State Education Department, 2011).

- The Colorado Department of Education uses the standardized Monitoring and Quality Improvement Tool to evaluate its 21st CCLC grantees. These grantees are required to use this tool once annually as an internal self-assessment for planning and quality improvement (Colorado Department of Education, 2011).

> Funders that require programs to engage in self-assessment and to use data to improve their quality essentially have adopted a view of afterschool programs not simply as deliverers of services but as learning organizations.

Public agencies are joined by large private organizations in a trend toward promoting self-assessment and continuous improvement as core components of their accountability systems. For instance, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America strongly encourages its sites to use its Youth Development Outcome Measurement Tool Kit (Boys & Girls Clubs of America, 2007). The United Way of America, one of the few funders that promoted a flexible, collaborative approach to measuring youth outcomes from the beginning (United Way of America, 1996), has for the past two decades supported affiliates to use outcome data in order to improve program quality (Hendricks, Plantz, & Pritchard, 2008). Currently NIOST is supporting the use of APAS by United Way affiliates in Philadelphia, Boston, and Atlanta. These affiliates are using components of APAS to help programs identify appropriate outcomes, assess quality, and use data for continuous improvement.

Growing evidence suggests that engaging in self-assessment can indeed lead to higher quality and be associated with better outcomes for young people. As explained by Weiss and Little (2008), self-assessment is associated with a "cycle of adaptation" in which afterschool sites collect and analyze data to bring about desired quality improvements as part of an ongoing process. Two qualitative studies (Pechman & Fiester, 2002; Wilson-Ahlstrom, Yohalem, & Pittman, 2007) suggest that afterschool staff are likely to view self-assessment findings as more credible and useful than results provided by external evaluations. Other afterschool studies have found that use of quality data motivates change (Akiva & Yohalem, 2006). Site-level engagement in self-assessment is likely to spawn changes in programming (Akiva & Smith, 2007; Harris, 2008; Smith, 2005) and, ultimately, improved outcomes (Sheldon & Hopkins, 2008).

Though self-assessment can help programs improve, simply engaging in self-assessment may not guarantee positive results. In fact, a study of self-assessment in healthcare names a number of factors necessary to bring about the positive effects of self-assessment, such as good alignment between self-assessment tools and desired areas of change, an open and trusting environment between frontline staff and supervisors, and constructive feedback and support during and following self-assessment (Bose, Oliveras, & Edson, 2001).

Afterschool Programs as Learning Organizations

Funders that require programs to engage in self-assessment and to use data to improve their quality essentially have adopted a view of afterschool programs not simply as deliverers of services but as *learning organizations*. Peter Senge (1990) describes learning organizations as dynamic institutions that expand their capacity to achieve results by engaging managers and employees in a process that helps them strive for personal mastery, create mental models, adopt a shared vision, promote team learning, and practice systems thinking.

A more recent interpretation of Senge's work (Garvin, Edmondson, & Gino, 2008) suggests that organizations can be most effective if they create a supportive learning environment where employees feel a sense of psychological safety, are encouraged to appreciate differences and new ideas, and have time for reflection. In successful learning organizations, "leaders actively question and listen to employees—and thereby prompt dialogue and debate" (Garvin, Edmondson, & Gino, 2008, p. 113). Organizational change must happen at the ground level, not just at the top. Moynihan (2005) suggests that organizations are more likely to learn from their data when "routines of data collection and dissemination are followed by routines of information use" (p. 203) through learning forums.

A look at research findings from studies in education (Eccles & Roeser, 1999; Pianta, 2003; Pianta & Hamre, 2009; Pressley et al., 2003), youth development (Eccles & Gootman, 2002), organizational learning (Garvin, Edmonson, & Gino, 2008; Senge, 1990), and practitioner self-assessment (Bose, Oliveras, & Edson, 2001; Wilson-Ahlstrom, Yohalem, & Pittman, 2007) suggest that many of the practices recommended for supporting learners cut across disciplines. While there are variations in specific beliefs and approaches, three main domains of effective learning environments appear to be common across disciplines: supportive social environments, opportunities for skill building, and appropriate structure and expectations (Figure 1).

Accountability Systems Designed to Support Afterschool Programs as Learning Organizations

The new generation of accountability systems is bridging the arenas of continuous quality improvement and accountability. By acknowledging the central importance of quality, aligning outcomes with program practices, and using self-assessment as a driver for change, the funders and sponsors using these approaches to accountability

Figure 1. Elements of Effective Learning Environments
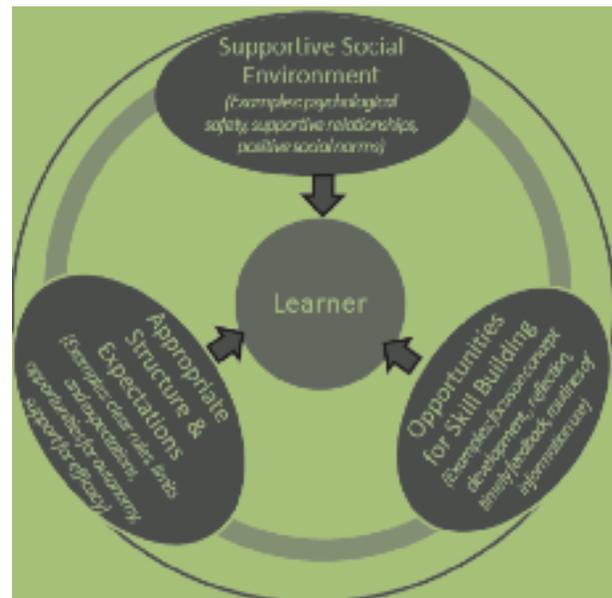
are likely to produce better results than will funders that require afterschool programs to report on academic and other long-term outcomes for youth.

For decades, the field of afterschool has sought to support children's positive development by creating quality standards for developmentally appropriate environments and by executing research-supported practices for advancing children's learning. These same principles can support the development of afterschool programs as learning organizations striving to improve quality.

Figure 2. Cycle of Afterschool Organizational Learning and Improvement
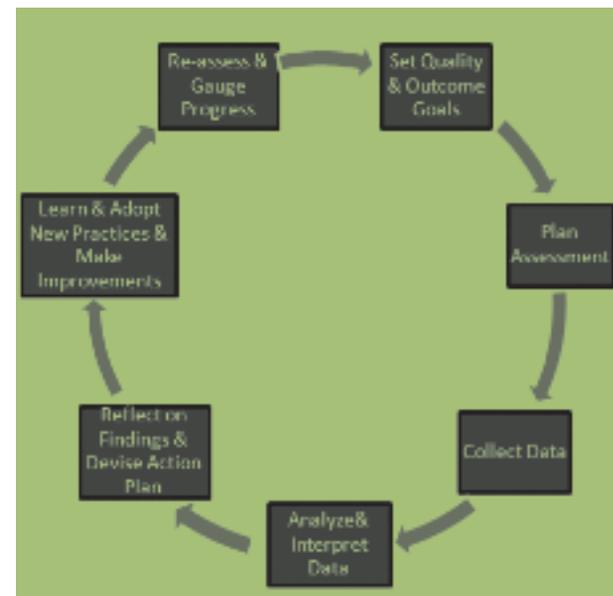
Supporting a Cycle of Afterschool Program Learning

Many funders, sponsors, and intermediary organizations, recognizing that programs need to learn, provide support, resources, and training to help programs use self-assessment. However, if architects of accountability systems are serious about improving program quality with an eye toward producing better youth outcomes, they should explicitly embrace the notion of afterschool programs as learning organizations.

Funders and sponsors that want to support programs as learning organizations could begin by recognizing the steps of the cycle of organizational learning and continuous program improvement (Figure 2). Many afterschool researchers and groups suggest a similar cycle, whose key steps are goal setting, planning, data collection, analysis, reflection, improvement, and reassessment (NIOST, 2011; Sheldon & Hopkins, 2008; Surr, Behler, & Milla-Lugo, 2009; Weiss & Little, 2008).

Accountability System Elements to Support the Learning Cycle

Drawing on research in organization development and education, funders and sponsors, in partnership with intermediary organizations, could explicitly support each step in this cycle by providing the key elements associated with effective learning environments (Figure 3). Afterschool programs receiving this combination of supports are more likely to become fully engaged "learners" and therefore to execute the quality improvements needed to produce positive youth outcomes.

**Figure 3. Accountability System Elements to Promote Afterschool Learning and Improvement**
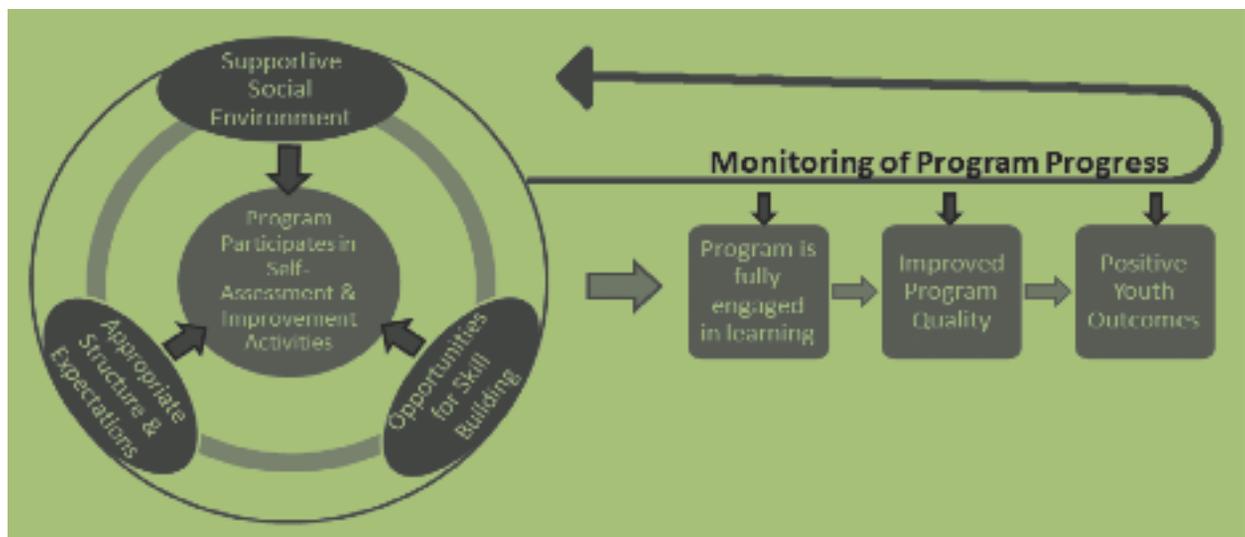
Figure 4. Accountability System Element: Supportive Social Environment
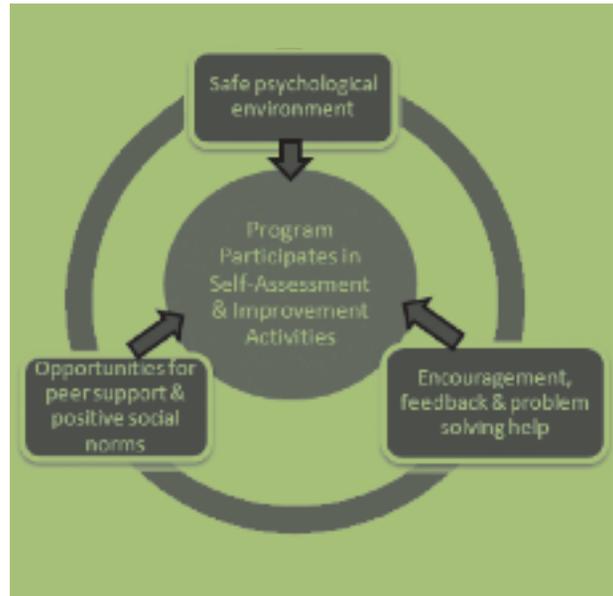
Supportive Social Environment

Research suggests that learning is more likely to take place in a supportive social environment (Akey, 2006; Benard, 1996; Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Connell & Gambone, 2002; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Pianta, 2003). Afterschool funders and sponsors have traditionally relied on intermediary organizations to support programs by providing training, coaching, and technical assistance. This approach has many advantages: programs get support from individuals with true expertise in the field while feeling free to acknowledge areas of weakness without fearing loss of funding. Figure 4 suggests how funders and sponsors can retain their monitoring role while fostering a supportive social environment for programs.

Safe psychological environment. A lower-stakes funding environment, in which funders do not penalize programs for reporting less than desirable results and refrain from comparing programs publicly, may help programs to engage more authentically in self-assessment.

Encouragement, feedback, and problem-solving help. Program leaders need support, constructive feedback, and help with improvement priorities from an external, seasoned expert. Traditionally this supportive person has been a coach, trainer, or technical assistance provider from an intermediary organization. Funding that enables these external supports to continue will benefit program learning.

Opportunities for peer support and positive social norms. Many state and city initiatives provide peer networking opportunities. Funders, sponsors, and intermediaries can help to create positive social norms for assessment by, for example, publicizing examples of how programs are integrating continuous improvement into their practice.

Opportunities for Skill Building

Program assessment and improvement are not innate skills. In fact, the skills needed to self-assess, collect data, and interpret and use that data represent a completely different skill set from the curricular, instructional, and administrative competencies afterschool professionals are expected to have. By providing opportunities for program leaders to master these skills and requiring that they demonstrate how they are incorporating assessment into their everyday practice, funders and sponsors can increase the likelihood that programs become learning organizations, achieve higher levels of quality, and ultimately produce better youth outcomes. Figure 5 and its description below suggest how funders, sponsors, and intermediary organizations can promote program skill building.

Build assessment literacy. Many (probably most) program administrators need to build skills in identifying appropriate outcomes, selecting measurement tools, using data management systems, and analyzing and interpreting data. While many funders and intermediaries provide one-day workshops and general support for these activities, program leaders need more explicit, intensive, and extended instruction to master these tasks (Lukin, Bandolos, Eckhout, & Mickelson, 2004). One recent initiative, the Boston Capacity Institute, works with youth-serving orga-

Figure 5. Accountability System Element: Opportunities for Skill Building
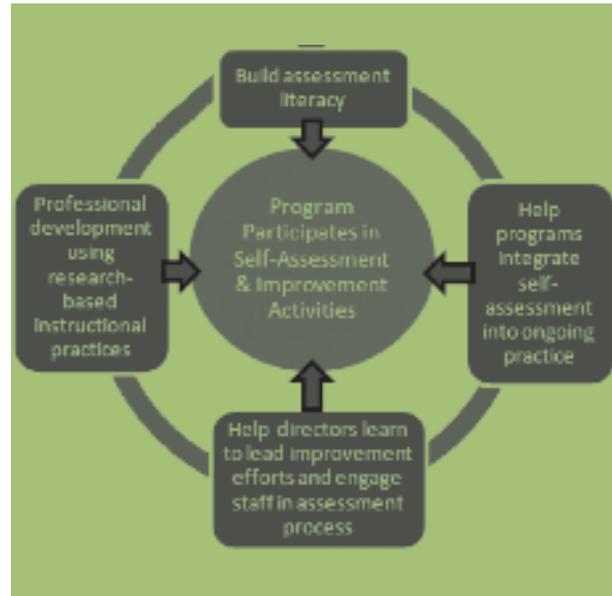
nizations to assess and strengthen their data collection and performance management systems through a rigorous two-year support process (Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston, 2011). Such intensive and focused interventions are comparatively rare. When providing programs with assessment literacy internally is not feasible, funders could encourage cohorts of funded programs to pursue "insourcing," in which programs share an external evaluator while practitioners focus on learning to understand and use actionable data (Miller, Kobayashi, & Noble, 2006).

Help programs integrate self-assessment into ongoing practice. One of the more promising methods of self-assessment is observation followed by structured reflection and a discussion of practice (Seidman, Tseng, & Weisner, 2006; Smith, 2005; Surr, Behler, & Milla-Lugo, 2009). Yet few program directors know how to conduct an observation, and fewer know how to lead staff in reflection on and discussion of practice. Another critical skill is the ability to articulate clear goals and devise realistic action plans on an ongoing basis (Moynihan, 2005). Funders and sponsors can help by asking leaders to communicate their improvement goals, to create written action plans that are clearly linked to their data findings, and to articulate how they are incorporating assessment into everyday practice.

Help directors learn to lead improvement efforts and engage staff in the assessment process. To facilitate program improvement, change must take place on the

front lines where staff members deliver programming to youth. Funders and intermediary organizations should set the expectation that assessment efforts will engage frontline staff and should teach administrators to train their staff in self-assessment.

Provide professional development that uses research-based instructional practices. Too many professional development workshops rely on written materials, slide presentations, and lecture rather than using the instructional methods research says will engage practitioners. Adult learners, like children and youth, respond best to teaching practices that are developmentally appropriate, that engage them in interactive and cooperative learning, and that help them construct meaning and build understanding from their existing knowledge and skill base.

Appropriate Structure and Expectations

Research suggests that effective learning environments balance a high degree of structure, rules, and routines with opportunities for learners to contribute, make decisions, and exercise their autonomy (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Funders and sponsors are in a unique position to offer programs the right blend of structure and flexibility and to set expectations that will lead to success. The building blocks of appropriate structure and expectations are outlined in Figure 6 and below.

Offer voice, choice, and opportunities for contribution and decision making. Like children and youth, afterschool practitioners need voice and choice in order to engage fully in learning. Giving them at least some choice in selecting areas for improvement and allowing them to target short-term outcomes appropriate to their programs will increase buy-in so that the data collected will reflect program goals and actually be used to inform practice. When appropriate, offering program administrators and staff the chance to contribute to or give feedback on accountability expectations will enhance their motivation to meet those expectations.

Set reasonable expectations for data collection. When they collect too much data, administrators and staff have difficulty understanding and using the information (Fiester, 2004; Harris, 2008; Sternberg, 2006). If practitioners are involved in decisions about which and how much data to collect—if they are encouraged to limit the amount of data they collect and to articulate the research questions the data will help them answer—then they will be more likely to use assessment data for change.

Figure 6. Accountability System Element: Appropriate Structure and Expectations
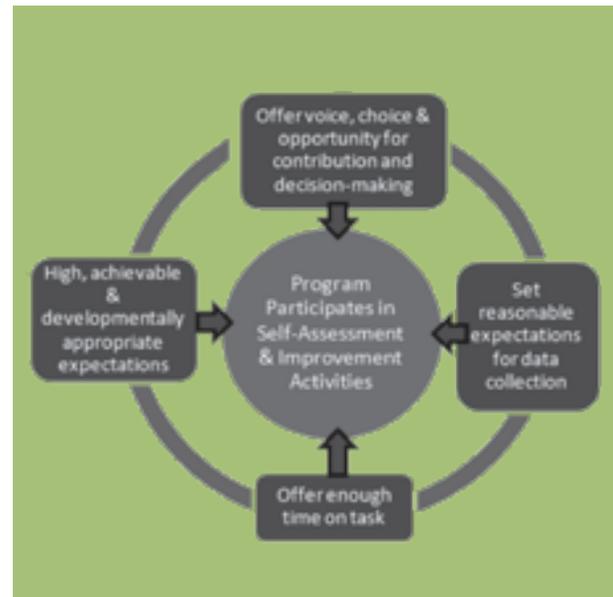
Offer enough time on task. Program improvement must be recognized as an integral piece of quality youth programming. Funders must, therefore, provide money to allow programs to dedicate *paid* staff time to assessment and improvement. Otherwise, these activities will continue to take a back seat to program operations and other daily responsibilities. Ideally large programs would dedicate one experienced staff person to lead assessment and improvement activities.

Set high, achievable, and developmentally appropriate expectations. As we know from the fields of education and youth development, one key element for effective learning is communicating, and holding learners to, high expectations (Benard, 1996; Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Learners respond best to expectations and learning goals that fit their developmental levels, are appropriately challenging, and can realistically be achieved (Akey, 2006; Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). Most afterschool programs will experience more success if, rather than striving for better student test scores, they promote appropriate short-term outcomes—such as youth engagement, social skills, and problem solving—that are linked to longer-term academic outcomes. Funders that set clear, high, and appropriate expectations for programs can motivate administrators and staff to keep improvement efforts on the front burner.

A New Direction for Accountability Systems

In the end, programs have to be held accountable for how they are benefiting the youth they serve. Given the overwhelming evidence that high-quality programs are essential to helping our children learn, funders and sponsors should uphold high expectations for quality, and, ultimately, for appropriate and realistic youth outcomes. But high expectations and accountability for outcomes alone are not enough. Accountability systems that embrace afterschool programs as learning organizations and offer them the structure, skill-building opportunities, and support they need to improve quality are most likely to succeed in their goal of achieving better outcomes for young people.

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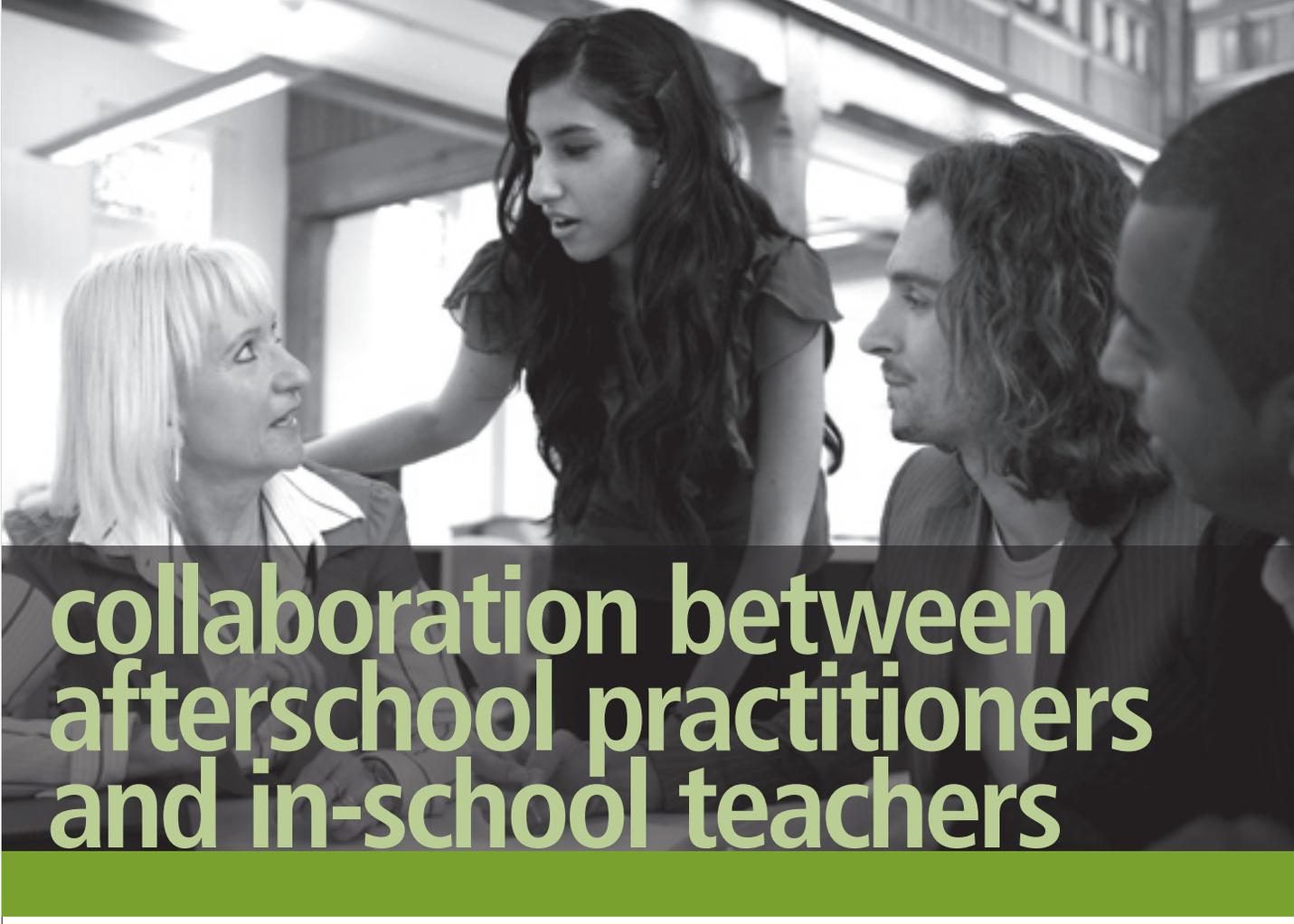
collaboration between afterschool practitioners and in-school teachers

by AnnMarie Schamper

Throughout my high school and college years, I worked as an assistant group leader in an afterschool program in a New Jersey suburb. My work with the students consisted of helping them with their homework and organizing and leading games and art activities. In the six years I spent with the afterschool program, I never created a relationship with any of my students' teachers. Not once did I speak with them about students' strengths and weaknesses or find out what was going on in the classroom.

I never thought twice about the lack of communication between the afterschool staff and the students' teachers until I became a teacher myself. The school where I teach is located in a rough neighborhood in North Philadelphia, where most families live in government housing and depend on welfare. The school's students are 99 percent African American. For many of them, the school is a safe haven from the violence of the neighborhood. Regardless of the hardships my students go through every day, they are the most amazing children I have ever met.

During my first year of teaching, I connected with my students and their families but hardly talked with anyone outside my grade level, which is kindergarten. As I started my second year of teaching, I reached out to communicate with other professionals. I also became a part of the Afterschool Matters Practitioner Research Fellowship, a small group of afterschool professionals who were eager to learn more about their field and to

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use inquiry to improve their work. The first meeting was an eye-opening experience; I learned about amazing things that were going on in afterschool programs around Philadelphia. I still thought that afterschool programs offered only homework help and games. The Afterschool Matters fellows told me that afterschool programs help students relate what they are learning in school to real-life experiences, providing the students with hands-on learning opportunities and getting them involved in their communities. Hearing this, I started to wonder what the afterschool program in my school did.

Learning from Afterschool and In-school Colleagues

I began my inquiry by sitting down with the director of my school's afterschool program. This program is provided free of charge to about 100 K–5 students from my school. It offers literacy programs such as Youth Education for Tomorrow and the 100 Book Challenge. Students also participate in project-based learning (PBL), in which they gain valuable skills by focusing on a question or problem and solving it through a collaborative process of investigation. The director explained that she creates the PBL units—including such topics as healthy eating, community, and bullying—on her own, designing lessons and objectives that relate to state teaching standards. Every teacher keeps a running record of rubrics to assess students' progress. After looking through her gigantic binder of rubrics and student work for each unit, I realized that afterschool programming wasn't just homework help any more. I was awed by how much the director did to create enriching learning experiences.

The director and I found many similarities between what I was teaching my students during the day and what they were investigating after school. I began to wonder how in-school teachers and afterschool practitioners could effectively and efficiently collaborate in order to facilitate student learning. I decided to start by finding out what each group of educators knew about what happened in the other's environment.

I sent an open-ended survey to the K–5 teachers in my school and a similar survey to the K–5 afterschool

> Six of the seven teachers who responded to my survey thought, as I had, that the afterschool program consisted of homework help, games, and crafts. Only one teacher knew that the program did projects that supported students' learning in social studies, science, and literacy.

practitioners. I found that both groups defined *collaboration* as work toward a common goal, and both saw the value in collaborating with their counterparts, though most in-school teachers hesitated because they felt they didn't have time for collaboration. Six of the seven teachers who responded to my survey thought, as I had, that the afterschool program consisted of homework help, games, and crafts. Only one teacher knew that the program did projects that supported students' learning in social studies, science, and literacy. When given a list of three ways that collaboration might affect outcomes, six teachers checked "student academic achievement," three checked "student behavior improvement," and six checked "improved staff communication."

The afterschool practitioners, by contrast, were well aware that their program activities correlated with themes taught during the school day. Their survey responses indicated that they wanted to work collaboratively with in-school teachers to support one another in fostering youth achievement and reinforce student learning. All six afterschool practitioners who answered the survey checked all three of the positive outcomes of collaboration: academic improvement, behavior improvement, and improved staff communication.

I was reassured to find that both parties wanted collaboration, but I shared their concerns on the issue of time. As I was thinking about how in-school and afterschool teaching professionals could collaborate with one another in a manner that did not bring more work or encroach on their limited nonteaching time, I thought of my own relationship with my students' afterschool practitioner, Ms. B.

My Experience with School-Afterschool Collaboration

Ms. B not only teaches my students after school but also serves as the pre-K teaching assistant during the school day. During my first year of teaching, Ms. B and I became close. She would help me when I was struggling with a student's behavior or when I needed ideas on activities to do in my classroom. Still, I never discussed the afterschool program with her.

After I gained insight into the afterschool program, I realized that Ms. B and I could do much more together to benefit our students. One day when my students were at lunch, I sat down to talk to Ms. B about what she does with the kids after school. She told me that they were in the middle of a unit on community, in which she had read the students books on neighborhoods and community workers. As I flipped through her binder of rubrics and student writing and art, I could not help but think that the work my students were producing for her was similar to the work they did with me. We started talking about individual students' strengths and weaknesses in both academics and behavior. I told her what I saw in my students during the day and she shared what she saw after school.

Our conversations about our students continued over the weeks. Any time either of us had a problem or saw a skill that a student needed to work on, we would contact the other in a quick phone call or classroom visit. Two examples illustrate how we worked together to improve students' behavioral and academic outcomes.

Ms. B and I were both having trouble with the behavior of a student I'll call Charles. Both during and after school, Charles was constantly calling out, getting out of his seat without permission, and screaming during independent work time. We needed to work together to get Charles' behavior under control because he was in danger of being kicked out of the afterschool program. After Ms. B and I discussed his issues, I sat down with Charles during lunch to write a behavioral contract. In response to my question, Charles told me that appropriate classroom behavior meant sitting in his seat, raising his hand, and using an indoor voice. His contract included these behaviors as well as rewards and consequences, both in my classroom and in Ms. B's. If Charles stayed true to the contract at least four days out of the week, he would get a treat on Friday, but if he broke the contact he would get lunch detention or sit out from fun afterschool activities such as parties and game time. After Charles signed the contract, I made copies for both me and Ms. B.

Every day, when Ms. B came to pick up the students for afterschool, I would give her a quick recap of how Charles' day had gone. If he stayed true to his contract,

> As I flipped through her binder of rubrics and student writing and art, I could not help but think that the work my students were producing for her was similar to the work they did with me.

he could participate in the fun learning experiences Ms. B had planned. If not, he would have to miss the afterschool party or not sit with his friends during learning activities and games. The next morning, I would call Ms. B to see how Charles had done the previous afternoon. Thus Charles' behavior was being monitored not only during the school day but also after school. The first week we tried this strategy, Charles had four lunch detentions and missed out on a Friday pizza party in Ms. B's classroom. However, after a month he started to show positive behavioral changes. If Ms. B and I had not collaborated on his behavior issues, Charles could very well have been dismissed from the afterschool program. Instead, because we worked closely together to monitor, correct, and reward his behavior, Charles made positive changes in the way he acted both in and after school.

In a second example, Ms. B and I collaborated to improve the reading skills of another student, "Tyquan." As the end of the second marking period approached, I tested my students' independent reading levels. I was concerned that Tyquan was not going to stay on track with the rest of the class. He could not discriminate between a word and a letter, could read only 10 of the 30 high-frequency words I had taught, and could not blend sounds in order to read unfamiliar words. I knew that Ms. B could help.

I went to Ms. B's classroom on my lunch break to discuss Tyquan's struggles. Ms. B had also noticed that his reading skills were not at the level of other students and that he needed a lot of support when the students did their 100 Book Challenge. I gave her a stack of ten books I was working on with Tyquan and asked if he could read those books for the 100 Book Challenge. I also gave her a list of the high-frequency words the students had learned, asking if she would post them and go over them for further reinforcement. She took the books and the word list and assured me she would use them both to help Tyquan become a stronger reader.

When I later asked Tyquan if he was practicing his reading during the afterschool program, he showed me the books he was reading after school—the ones I had given Ms. B. A month later, I retested Tyquan to see if he had improved his reading skills. I found that he could

now discriminate between a word and a letter and was able to read five new high-frequency words. He had also improved on his ability to blend sounds into words. I was impressed by the gains he had made and was excited that he could continue to become an even stronger reader.

These two examples show how an in-school teacher and an afterschool practitioner can collaborate without taking on extra work. We voiced our concerns about students in quick phone calls and face-to-face conversations, each using the other to help solve a problem. Our collaboration benefited our students, who now see a connection between school and afterschool. They know that what they do in school correlates with and can affect what they do after school and vice versa. Ms. B and I enjoyed a trusting and supportive relationship as friends and educational professionals. This relationship helped to improve our students' academics, behavior, and social relationships without taking a great deal of our time or creating more work for either of us.

Making Collaboration Work

I'd love to see the kind of collaboration Ms. B and I experienced among many more school and afterschool teachers. A schoolwide effort with the support of the principal would likely provide the most benefit for students. Here are my ideas about how collaboration between school and afterschool teacher pairs could be fostered.

A schoolwide collaboration might begin with a short information session to educate the in-school teachers about what goes on after school and the afterschool practitioners about what happens in the classroom. Such a meeting might be lead by one in-school teacher and one afterschool practitioner. These educators and others might share ideas on how to collaborate without creating more work or taking more time.

I can't recommend highly enough the quick conversations, both in each other's classrooms and by phone, that fueled the collaboration between Ms. B and me. In addition, in-school teachers and afterschool practitioners could create a journal that they could pass back and forth to discuss their struggles and achievements with their students. They could use the journal to monitor student performance and behavior, share lesson plans and objectives, and set down student achievements and struggles by sharing test results and other data. This journal need not take much time or create work. Similarly, the two professionals could communicate via an assignment pad passed back and forth by a student. The teacher could note the students' homework, and either professional could write comments on students' behavior or need

for help. These forms of communication would be very simple for both professionals.

Collaboration can work; we just need to be creative. We can work together to learn what works and what doesn't. Collaboration between in-school teachers and afterschool practitioners helps both sets of professionals, but the ultimate beneficiaries are the students.

university-community
partnership

Kristen E. Fay, Ph.D., National Institute on Out-of-School Time

Jentleson, B.C. (2011). *Better together: A model university-community partnership for urban youth.* **New York, NY: Teachers College Press.**

In the face of unsuccessful educational reform efforts aimed at closing the achievement gap and of urban universities' urgent desire to address distressing conditions in their host communities, interest has focused on university and community partnerships. Barbara Jentleson's book *Better Together: A Model University-Community Partnership for Urban Youth* shows that such collaborations are characterized by complex challenges as well as diverse benefits. University-community partnerships require strategic planning, flexibility, and a collaborative vision.

Better Together examines in depth the first decade of the Duke-Durham Neighborhood Partnership (DDNP), focusing on its involvement with six community-based afterschool programs sponsored by Duke's Project HOPE (Holistic Opportunities Plan for Enrichment). The primary aim of Project HOPE was to provide academic support to Durham's low-income minority youth. Jentleson's mixed-method approach combined case studies; interviews with community and university leaders; and perspectives from college students, teachers, and project staff to answer the book's central question: *"How do university and community partners develop a mutually beneficial relationship?"* Jentleson's close account of this collaboration describes the learning process that unfolded both for Duke University project staff and students and for the staff of the community-based organizations.
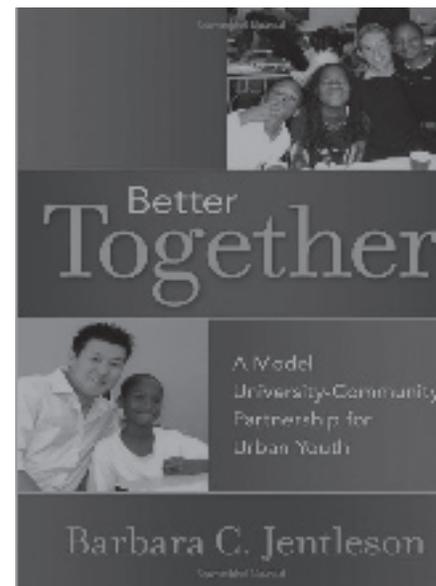
The book's five chapters describe the common challenges facing university-community partnerships, outline strategies for managing these issues, highlight the lessons learned through Project HOPE, and describe how these lessons can apply to other programs. The opening chapter chronicles the history of university-community partnerships, describing our nation's earliest vision that universities would "improve the quality of life in American cities" (p. 6). In addition, this chapter explores the development and scope of the DDNP and of Project HOPE. Jentleson details the individual stories of the DDNP neighborhoods to highlight the complexity and diversity of issues facing university and community partners. As the reader learns about the unique and shared challenges facing each community—access to medical services, affordable housing, crime, rental housing being taken over by student housing—it becomes clear that Duke University will itself receive a solid education from its surrounding neighborhoods.

After providing this context of Project HOPE and the DDNP, Jentleson presents a historical overview of afterschool programs that focuses on their impact on youth, their role during out-of-school time, and obstacles to implementation and sustainability. The "lessons learned" from advances and challenges in afterschool programming become a guiding framework for the diverse issues that often arise in community-university collaborations.

Jentleson then examines the multiple learning communities that developed out of Project HOPE's emphasis on service learning and civic engagement. The diverse voices of Durham community youth, university students, public school staff, university faculty and staff, and community partners enable the reader to envision the broad spectrum of learning opportunities that characterized the partnership.

With a deeper understanding of the dynamics of community-university partnerships, Jentleson shifts focus to issues of data ownership, use, sharing, and feedback. Chapter 4 examines how university and community partners participating in Project HOPE created a sturdy and sustainable data evaluation framework that allowed for ongoing data monitoring and evaluation.

The final chapter of the book reviews the results of the first decade of the DDNP in the three key areas of intended impact: academic and youth development, neighborhood stabilization, and university impacts. Jentleson balances her discussion of benefits to the Durham community and to Duke University with a frank description of the challenges facing university-community partnerships in developing quality afterschool programs in urban communities. She concludes with a focus on future directions and on the importance of strategic planning, stressing that the dialogue between community and university partners needs to be sustained and expanded.

Potential audiences for this book include youth practitioners and leaders, university educators, and community organization staff—with or without experience in community-university partnership. Jentleson systematically and articulately outlines a replicable model for successful university-community partnership aimed at transforming the learning and non-academic outcomes of minority youth. Graduate students in education are another audience who may benefit from Jentleson's careful and comprehensive analysis of the transformative potential of community-university partnerships.

Although the book is well written, well structured, and comprehensive, some sections can be a bit dense. Historical descriptions heavy on dates and names distract the reader from the central findings and strategies relevant to building sustained community-university partnerships. Nonetheless, this book is a valuable contribution to the field and an excellent resource on how educators and community organizers can combine their resources to effect positive changes in our nation's youth.

Afterschool Matters

Call for Papers

Spring 2013 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 Spring 2013 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 providing programs for youth during the out-of-school time hours, in addition to those engaged in research and in shaping youth development policy.

The Spring 2013 issue of *Afterschool Matters* will specifically focus on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) in the out-of-school time (OST) program hours. This specially focused issue is made possible through the generous support of the NOYCE Foundation. Suggested topics include:

- Descriptions, research, and analyses of out-of-school time programs and initiatives that support learning through STEM experiences, including those in afterschool programs, museums, and other informal STEM education learning environments.
- Descriptions of strategies for increasing the number of well-prepared and effective STEM OST program staff and leaders.
- Research on STEM learning in OST and the development of STEM OST instructional materials and curriculum.
- Identification and exploration of promising practices in STEM OST programming and teaching.
- Research on STEM program quality indicators and tools for STEM program quality assessment.
- Personal or inspirational STEM-focused narratives and essays for our section "Voices from the Field."
- Exploration of STEM OST topics such as: (a) metrics to assess youth knowledge or skill competency, (b) staff professional development, (c) alignment of STEM OST content and K–12 education, (d) STEM OST content guidelines that outline essential knowledge and skills for STEM workforce participation, and (e) organization partnerships that support STEM program delivery.

Submission Guidelines
- Deadline is July 20, 2012, for the Spring 2013 issue of *Afterschool Matters*.
- Submissions should be 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 topics are welcome.

To inquire or to submit manuscripts, contact:

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