AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING IN THE LIBRARY

by

Wendi Reinwald

ABSTRACT

By

Wendi Reinwald

The public library can play a unique role in connecting students with effective after-school programming. When done correctly, public libraries meet their goals of creating life-long library users, help students with informational and educational needs, and provide a safe learning environment. After-school programs can provide children the opportunity for improving academic achievement. However, are these programs effective?

The research provided to answer this question was limited to peer-reviewed journals, program studies, and print resources. This research paper offers evidence regarding the impact after-school programs have on participants. The results show that participants in after-school reading promotion programs are exposed to more reading time and, in turn, improve reading ability. Those participants attending after-school homework assistance programs did not show significant changes in academic achievement, although attitudes toward school improved. This research also mentions the importance of technology in after-school programming and offers information regarding funding and evaluation.

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING IN THE LIBRARY

By

Wendi Reinwald

<u>A Research Paper</u>
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Library Science and Information Services
in the Department of Educational Leadership and Human Development
University of Central Missouri

August 08, 2013

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING IN THE LIBRARY

by

Wendi Reinwald

August 08, 2013

APPROVED:

Advisor: Patricia Antrim

Committee Member: Jennifer Robins

ACCEPTED:

Chair, Department of Education Leadership and Human Development: Patricia Antrim

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL MISSOURI
WARRENSBURG, MISSOURI

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my family and friends; it is your love and support that has made this journey possible. To Nick, I want to thank you for talking me up and talking me down. You have strong shoulders that offer invaluable support. And to Parker, you are my sunshine, everything I do I am doing for you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Effective after-school programs play a vital role in student success. Researchers have

concluded that "children and youth who participate in after-school programs can reap a host of

positive benefits in a number of interrelated outcome areas – academic, social/emotional,

prevention and health and wellness" (Lauver 01). During the last 10 years, a sizable amount of

research has occurred that analyzes the landscape of after-school programs and offers evidence

on the impacts they have on children (Gayl 03).

After-school programming emerged in the United States late in the 19th century and

many programs had humble beginnings (Hirsch 01). Currently in America, 26 percent of the

nation's youth are on their own during the after school hours of 3:00-6:00 pm (Afterschool

Alliance). Librarians and other community members try to address the issues concerning these

'latchkey kids' and provide effective programming for this population of youth.

After-school programs lead to better attitudes toward school and stronger school

engagement, stronger school performance, higher rates of school attendance, fewer behavioral

problems, and lower dropout rates (Lauver 01). Due to the demand for academic achievement,

many programs have "ramped up" their after-school programs so they are increasingly part of

the education process (Hirsch 01). After-school programs that primarily offer reading

assistance as a supplement to quality classroom instruction attempt to ensure that all children

can read (United States Department of Education). The goal of youth services in the public

library is the promotion of reading and literacy. Reading opportunities during a library after-

school program allow flexibility not offered during the school day such as self-choice, crafts, and informal book discussions.

Homework assistance is another type of after-school programming. Homework plays a vital role in developing student motivation and achievement (Shernoff and Vandell 893). Due to the competition for college admission, students are faced with an increase in homework demands (Macias et al. 02). After-school library programs have become a venue for aiding students with their homework. Library programs that offer homework assistance provide students with resources, guidance, and support towards their learning goals.

Technology is an important aspect to an effective after-school library program. Many after-school programs face challenges as librarians weigh the risks and benefits of technology for youth. Some after-school programs have increased physical access to technology through computer labs, media, and software collections. Quality after-school programmers acknowledge the importance of technology and have made significant efforts to integrate a technological infrastructure into their educational programs (Herr-Stephenson 11).

Funding is crucial to the after-school program. Americans rely upon libraries as a public service and support them through public funds. However, many libraries are ill equipped to meet the overwhelming need of children through after-school programs. Most library programs lack the base of government support that schools benefit from. Funds are available to those programmers who search for them and many funders offer books as a means of donation.

Statement of Problem

With so many youth unattended during the after school hours, quality after-school programs are a necessity. Reading promotion and academic achievement are two areas for after-school programming that students can participate in to improve their skills. Public libraries are in a unique position to offer resources and guidance to advance youth academically. The problem arises when there are not enough funds to offer these programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to review the literature on after-school programs that offer reading promotion and homework assistance. The focus of this research is on academic after-school programs to determine if those that emphasize reading support or homework assistance are found to be effective. Attention is placed on after-school programs that take place in the public library. This study also comments on the need for technology in after-school programs and how funding is necessary to subsidize quality programs. Means of applying for individual grants to fund after-school programs are also suggested.

Research Questions

As students are faced with the demands of increasing academic achievement, the question arises, are after-school programs an effective means to improvement in reading skills or homework completion? This study examines the effectiveness of programs that evaluate student outcomes through after-school program participation by answering the following questions:

1. How do structured reading opportunities held during after-school programs assist in reading advancement?

2. How do formal homework assistance programs increase students' academic achievement?

3. Why is it important for the public library to integrate technology into after-school programming to enhance or assist in academic achievement?

4. What methods can be employed to ensure funding for effective after-school programs?

Limitations of the Study

There is no lack of research on after-school programs although much of the research available evaluates after-school programs relating to emotional and social well-being opportunities that aid participants in developing social skills. Research that evaluates academic success is limited because it is not possible to separate measurements to determine in school versus after school improvements.

Definition of Terms

After-school – Time of day that does not overlap with normal school hours (Gullotta, et al. 44)

Funding – Attaining money or donations for use in after-school programs

Homework – Tasks assigned in school that are to be completed in a setting outside of normal class period

Research Design

This research study examined previously published literature regarding after-school programming and focused on reading promotion and homework assistance. No actual research was conducted, but questions relating to the topic were used to guide and aid in the research

process. Articles were retrieved from the following databases: *Academic Search Elite*; *ERIC*;

*Library Literature & Information Scien*ce.

The researcher also conducted Internet searches of the Missouri Department of

Secondary and Elementary Education; Afterschool Alliance, Ed.gov, the Harvard Family

Research Project, ExpandED Schools, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Progressive

Policy Institute, GTECH Corporation, PEW Studies, Scholastic After School Learning Program,

Dollar General Literacy Foundation, and Media MashUp. Search terms included: "after-school

programs," "library programming," after-school funding," public libraries after-school." In

addition, research was collected from a variety of print sources including, *Connecting Young*

Adults and Libraries, Fun Literacy Activities for After-School Programs, Leading Kids to Books

through Crafts, Digital Media and Technology in Afterschool Programs, Libraries, and Museums,

Building Effective Afterschool Programs, Afterschool Matters, A Blueprint for Promoting

Academic and Social Competence in After-School Programs, Sizzling Summer Reading Programs

for Young Adults, and *Becoming a Nation of Readers*. These sources were discovered while

conducting Internet searches.

Conclusion

This study includes three chapters related to after-school programming and the impact

these programs have on student achievement with focus on reading promotion and homework

assistance. The study also includes the integration of technology into after-school programs

and the need for funding to sustain effective programming. Chapter 1 introduced the topic of

after-school programming, a statement of the problem concerning quality after-school

programming, the purpose of this study, the research questions addressed, limitations of the

study, the research design and provided a glossary of terms. Chapter 2 reviews previously

published literature on the selected topic. Chapter 3 is comprised of the answers to the

research questions presented in chapter 1.

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Over the last decade, a significant amount of research has emerged analyzing after-school programs in America. This research offers evidence regarding the impact these programs have on children. Research is catching up with the commonsense notion that structured after-school programs provide students a positive environment to develop (Gayl 03). After-school programs provide children the opportunity for improving academic achievement and the benefit of extracurricular activities. Structured activities and services for students after school has been practiced for more than a century, but the current educational standards and the accountability movement have led to greater public interest in these programs. According to the Progressive Policy Institute, the need for after school programming can be broken down into four categories: safety and decreased deviant behavior, improved social skills and self-confidence, school attitudes and behaviors, and increased academic achievement. The focus of this research will be on academic after-school programs to determine if those that emphasize reading support or homework assistance are found to be effective for student achievement. Emphasis is placed on after-school library programs that take place in public libraries.

According to the 2004 *America After 3pm* survey, provided by the Afterschool Alliance and the J.C. Penney Co., Inc., 11% (6.5 million) of the nation's youth, grades K-12 participate in afterschool programs. Socioeconomic status and racial characteristics are linked to program participation and participation in structured extracurricular activities has been associated with academic and social-emotional functioning for students aged 15-18 (Macias et al. 03).

Regardless of the significant amount of time students spend in after school programs, many organizations are misunderstood or dismissed as "daycare," yet for the majority of

students who attend after school programs, this is where they receive academic support

(Fokkena 27). A quality after-school program serves as a lifeline to many students who are

disengaged from traditional schooling (Hill xiv). According to a study issued by the Afterschool

Alliance, high quality after-school programs enhance academic success and contribute to better

attitudes toward school and stronger school performance as measured by standardized test

scores and grades.

For the purpose of this paper, "after-school" is defined as time that does not overlap

with normal school hours (Gullotta, et al. 44). Structured after-school programs are defined as

programs for the benefit of school-aged children that are monitored by an adult. These

programs intentionally seek to promote growth and development by focusing on the following

areas: academic and cognitive, personal and social, cultural, artistic, or civic development (44).

Robert Apsler expands the definition by suggesting that in addition to the above, after-school

programs should also provide a flexible, homelike environment, prevent behavior problems,

and provide recreational activities (3). In addition, time, space, and resources for homework

completion, knowledgeable tutors and dedicated staff, and activities and opportunities to

engage in interaction are commonalities of a successful after-school program (Gorman,

Suellentrop, and Jones 253).

An important aspect of after-school programming designed to promote academic

achievement is to align programs with regularly scheduled school time. The US Department of

Education outlines a set of tips for a well aligned program; shared responsibility between after-

school practitioners, school day professionals, and families (Lauver 42). Other tips for after-

school programs are to associate academic learning with daily life, data-driven decision-making

and communication with teachers regarding student progress, hiring high quality staff with experience in youth development dedicated to planning and preparation to maximize student success, building partnerships that are maintained at multiple levels in the school district, using two-way communication between after-school practitioners and school day staff, and providing connections to family and community resources (Lauver 42).

The public library plays a crucial role in connecting students with effective after-school programming. A PEW research study performed in 2013 asserts that 81% of the parents surveyed feel that libraries provide their children with information and resources not available at home, and 97% feel that it is important that libraries offer programs and classes for children and teens (PEW Research Center 2). When programming is done correctly, it will help libraries meet their goals to create lifelong library users; enrich the community; provide a safe learning environment; and help students with informational, educational, and recreational needs. In addition to providing access to social and cultural ideas, after-school programs in the library encourage young people to share knowledge and ideas with one another (Gorman, Suellentrop, and Jones 225). Furthermore, effective after-school programs encourage "hands-on" learning to keep participants involved, allowing them a sense of ownership in the program. The best after-school programs, like the best schools, promote successful learning that results from partaking in activities that students actively participate in (Hill xvi).

The first section of this paper examines how after-school programs promote reading. The second section discusses ways students receive homework assistance in after-school programs. Next after-school programs with technology labs are described. In the final section issues and solutions related to funding after-school programs are presented.

Reading Promotion

Many after- school programs focus on reading promotion; concern over reading achievement has been a longstanding issue. In a 2003 report, *The Nation's Report Card"* *Reading Highlights 2003* published by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) which measured comprehension of grade appropriate reading materials, 26% of the students assessed performed below the basic level. The NAEP defines basic level as the level where students have partial mastery of the skills and knowledge needed for operational work at each grade level. The report found that 74% performed at or above the basic level. Only 3 percent performed at the advanced level. Advanced level denotes superior performance (Kan 04). Many hours of the regularly scheduled school day focus on reading skills, but few are promoting good reading habits and book selection. "Common sense suggests that children who read more tend to be stronger readers than those who do not read much, and some research evidence has suggested a positive relationship between time spent reading and reading performance" (Little and Hines, 2006). Structured reading opportunities during the after-school program can allow flexibility that might not be possible during school hours.

Various research studies have tested the effectiveness of after-school programs that focus on reading development. A study done in 1985 by the Commission on Reading concluded that "the single most important activity for building knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children" (Little and Hines 13). This belief has been in practice in the elementary years with great success and can be effective in the intermediate years as well.

The Project Expanding Horizons study (Gayl 2004) was conducted during after-school hours over a 12-week period. Participants included 155 students, grades 3-6, from diverse

districts. The project was intended to support challenging reading and independent pursuit of reading interests among elementary and middle school students in an after-school setting. Expanding Horizons provided students with a wide variety of books, placing emphasis on personally challenging reading material and included a specific focus on meeting the needs of advanced readers. The project was broken down into three phases: exposure, supported independent reading, and choice. During the exposure phase teachers read aloud, modeling reading enjoyment, reading strategies, and locating books that were challenging yet interesting for students. With supported independent reading, participants read independently from self-selected books, with teacher guidance to ensure the material will be appropriately challenging. In this phase instructors circulated the room holding individual conferences about the readings. Open discussion was followed by a read-aloud session, then a discussion of reading strategies where students asked higher-level questions and made connections with other books and experiences. Phase three focused on choices. Here students were given a choice of activities related to their reading and individual interest. During the session the students were presented with options including online exploration, development of expressive products, or shared conversations about books. In addition, students could continue to read independently, with a partner or they could listen to an audio book. The average weekly gains in reading fluency were compared to grade-level national norms.

The results of the Expanding Horizon Project suggest that participation in the program may have contributed support to students' growth in reading achievement over the course of the 12 weeks. The study provided some validation for the benefits of having students engage in independent reading that is interesting and challenging for grades 3 and 5, though not for

grades 4 and 6. Students were encouraged to use the after-school program time reading books

that interested them but that were "somewhat" difficult. This placed emphasis on challenge in

addition to enjoyment (12). Students also developed self-regulation skills in order to monitor

their own reading level and to engage in reading comprehension strategies (Little and Hines

12). By providing this opportunity, after-school students were allowed flexibility and

informality in their reading experiences. These are positive inputs for the after-school project

(29).

Another study, directed by Andrea Nelson-Royes and Gary Reglin was conducted during

the 2007-2008 school year. They qualitatively investigated the reading component of a

program that offered academic assistance to students. The authors performed a study on the

reading component of a private, after-school, tutoring program focusing on urban middle

school students. The authors explain that many urban middle school students have less than

adequate reading skills, causing those students to perform poorly on reading standardized tests

(105). The A*fter-School Tutoring for Reading Achievement and Urban Middle School Students*

study included 30 students from the eighth grade who attended a local tutoring facility. Half of

the students came from low-income homes. The educators included one director and six

qualified teachers who conducted one-on-one tutoring support. Students were encouraged to

practice what they had learned and were challenged to complete homework assignments,

study, and ask for help when needed (115). Nelson-Royes and Reglin concluded that the

reading component was helpful and the students improved their reading skills.

The role of after school programs that focus on literacy development reinforce literacy

skills and provide experiences that develop concepts and expand vocabulary. Although school

and public libraries share a common goal in attempting to induce children into leisure reading

habits, public libraries represent "qualitatively distinct cultures" when compared to libraries in

schools (Alvermann, Young, Green, and Wisenbaker 226). Public library after-school programs

are in a unique position to support literacy development in a variety of ways. They do not have

to imitate the school day to integrate literacy into the program (Edwards, Martinez, and

Edwards 7). Public libraries do not attempt to regulate what adolescents read, and there is no

dress code or "no talking" rules. Public libraries operate under relaxed norms and cater to the

adolescent reader through young adult services (Alvermann et al. 226). In public libraries

educational programs are a subgroup of a larger collection of youth services. "The ultimate

purpose of youth services in both schools and public libraries is the promotion of reading and

literacy. This goal underlies a wide range of activities, all designed to facilitate connections

between young people and texts" (Herr-Stephenson, 39).

Bauer and Laurent believe that crafts enhance a literature program. They state that

crafts can be utilized to introduce characters, focus attention on the story and the author,

display scenes, or explain a plot. Crafts can be applied to recap story highlights, emphasize a

main theme, and increase language development to reinforce the story's message (2). The

consensus is to provide engaging activities that utilize literacy skills using an un-intimidating

approach.

<div align="center">**Homework Assistance**</div>

The second aspect of this paper is to identify the need and effectiveness of after-school

programs that offer homework assistance. Homework plays a critical role in the development

of students' motivation and achievement (Shernoff and Vandell 893). The amount of time

spent on homework is undoubtedly important. The quality of the experience during homework completion can also affect learning. Positive student attitudes about homework have been clearly related to homework completion rates and class grades (Shernoff and Vandell 893). The 1990s saw a sharp increase in homework demands. This is in response to the awareness of a greater competition for college admissions. Students need to work harder to qualify for the college of their choice (Macias et al. 02). The pressure for higher academic performance has caused an increase in the amount and complexity of assigned work (Macias et al. 1).

Homework does not always occur in the home; assigned tasks can be completed in a variety of settings outside of the normal class period. After-school library programs have become a venue for aiding students with their homework. Approximately one in seven public libraries nationwide offers formal after-school homework assistance to elementary and secondary students (Mediaville 02). "Libraries are able to serve purposes similar to after-school programs by providing young people with safe spaces and support for learning while working towards learning goals" (Herr -Stephenson 36). The function of after-school programs offering homework assistance is to assist children in developing and improving their academic skills. Homework assistance programs may involve well-designed curriculum, utilize teacher assistance, and conduct student assessments, but should provide students with resources and guidance.

A research study that focused primarily on homework assistance after school is the Gevirtz Homework Project (Harvard Family Research Project). The Gevirtz Homework Project (GHP) is an after-school program held in three public elementary schools implemented and evaluated in southern California. The program began in October 1997 with the purpose of

expanding the understanding of the influence of after-school homework assistance on

elementary children with a broad range of abilities. The goal of the project is to provide

students with academic support and tips to improve academic achievement through homework

assistance and study skills. The program is based on the premise that a consistent homework

policy should be implemented in the school setting. The program philosophy was to provide

specific homework assistance through a qualified teacher and aide to assist students with

homework and assist in the development of study skills, in turn, promoting a sense of personal

responsibility. Teachers and aides also encouraged students to uphold a positive attitude

toward school attendance and participation in school functions. Students committed to

attending a minimum of 3 weekly sessions for a duration of 3 years in order to build a strong

academic foundation. In addition, teachers and aides addressed student homework needs

without insisting on parental involvement in order to decrease parental stress and assure that

students had the help they required. For the purpose of the GHP study, homework was defined

as "student learning activities conducted outside of school hours." The homework related to

the major curricular areas: language arts, math, science, and social studies. The study focused

on students enrolled in fourth through sixth grades, serving approximately 70 students.

Using quantitative data, the GHP study indicated that the project found no "significant

differences" on any of the outcome measures, including homework completion as reported by

the homeroom teacher (Macias et al. 10). The range of outcomes suggested the need for

further analysis. Researchers found that the project served as a "protective" function for those

with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). It appears that students with LEP benefited the most by

participating in the homework program. In addition, it revealed that students who attended a

greater number of sessions spanning the three-year period achieved higher achievement

scores. Students interviewed at the completion of the project were quoted as saying, "It helps

me with my homework so I raised my grades." Another responded, "I feel lucky to be in it."

Another student explained, "I used to feel, 'How can I do this,' but not anymore! Now I know I

can always get my homework done correctly" (Cosden and Morrison 3). Based on the GHP

study, it appears that some students benefited from the after-school homework project. The

after-school programs served different functions for different users (Macias et al, 14). This

includes increasing academic achievement. Although this program takes place in an elementary

school, the effects of participating in the after-school program are evident in the responses of

students. If a program such as the Gevirtz Homework project were offered in a public library

setting, it is believed to be just as effective.

Sandra Macias and colleagues assert that after-school programs have become a venue

for assisting students with homework. The research inspects the potential of after-school,

homework-assistance programs within the larger framework of after-school programs in

general. As noted earlier in this paper, participation in structured extracurricular activities has

been positively connected with academic and social-emotional functioning for students.

Macias et al. agree that after-school programs can serve four purposes: supervision and safety,

cultural and community identification, development of social skills with increased competency,

and improved academic achievement (3). Macias et al. refer to a study that found that children

who participated in formal after-school programs were less likely to abuse drugs and that after-

school programs can provide inner-city children with an emotionally and physically safe place to

go (3). Macias et al. suggest that after-school programs that focus on academic assistance may

affect students' confidence and status within the school, noting that participation in the program in the study boosted confidence in students' academic performance.

Technology Labs in the Library

Many after-school programs face a number of challenges as they weigh the risks and benefits of digital media and technology for youth. Some struggle with how best to provide a technological groundwork for young people and to support youth-driven digital media practices. Some after-school programs have increased physical access to technology through computer labs, media, and software collections. Others have responded to pressures surrounding student learning and achievement by offering 21st century skills courses and workshops. By acknowledging both the importance of digital media and technology, many after-school programs have made significant efforts to adopt technological infrastructure into their educational programs (Herr-Stephenson 11). Expanded learning time through after-school programs offers time, space, and conditions to advance technology empowered learners. Libraries that offer after-school programs are making an effort to use digital media and technology as ways to extend, enrich, and encourage learning (Herr-Stephenson 64). Using technology, students have the opportunity to develop skills to innovate and to later succeed in the global workplace; utilizing communication, collaboration, and problem solving.

Technology has been used to expand arts and science programs, homework help, vocational and job preparation, and for fun (Fokkena 26). The archived article; *Technology in After-School Programs* recorded a survey conducted in 1997 by the United States Department of Education which indicated that parents had enrolled or would like to enroll their child in an after-school program; 95% felt that their child would benefit from a program that included

computer technology classes (United States Department of Education). The agency deemed

that computers and Internet access provide opportunities for after school learning to reinforce

reading, math, and writing skills in addition to homework completion and school assignments

focusing on research, gathering information, and writing reports (United States Department of

Education). Whether used for education, communication, or recreation it is imperative that

students have the opportunity to learn, through practical training, the information and

technological literacy skills necessary for future success (Gorman, Suellentrop, and Jones 270).

In the piece, *Technological Literacy: A National Priority*, the United States Department of

Education asserts that technological literacy is crucial for today's world. Technological literacy

is not just knowing how to use technology, but it is utilizing the "powerful learning

opportunities afforded by technology to increase learning in academic subjects and to increase

students skills" (United States Department of Education).

Research has shown that the public library is the number one place for students who do

not have internet access at home to get online. It is critical that public libraries remain a place

of equitable access in order to continue helping bridge the digital divide (Gorman, Suellentrop,

and Jones 270). There are many ways the library can offer academic and enrichment activities

involving technology. This will mean investments in new technologies and creating programs

that focus on technology such as computer clubs and classes. In addition, libraries integrate

technology into existing programs or update older programs to accommodate for change. The

"classic computer lab," where computer use is supervised but not structured, is one of the most

common ways of integrating technology into after-school programming (Fokkena 31). By

providing up-to-date computers and Internet use, participants of after-school programs have

access to new learning opportunities and the ability to acquire technology and information

management skills.

A passage in a book written in 1985, *Becoming a Nation of Readers* states, "computer

software companies are developing beginning reading programs" (Anderson 25). At that time,

there was little solid information about the impact of computers on childrens' reading. The

authors believed that a computer was an "extraordinarily versatile piece of equipment," and it

would be reasonable to assume that a computer could play a useful role in learning (25). Over

the last decade, the Internet has become a vital part of the informational world.

Today we know that technology can deepen the understanding of complex ideas, issues,

and phenomena. Twenty-first century skills are enhanced using technology and learners make

progress in learning how to learn. We have seen a higher percentage of learners succeed with

technology tools. We know that assistive devices bring success to a variety of learners facing

physical, developmental, and language problems. Technology is also dramatically changing the

way students learn on their own (TASC).

After-school technical assistance, provided by the Missouri AfterSchool Network (MASN)

is a statewide service provided by the Missouri Afterschool Resource Center (Missouri

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education). This assistance is made available

through the partnership between the Missouri Afterschool Network, DESE, and the University

of Missouri-Extension. It is available for schools and community organizations that provide

quality-learning opportunities after school. MASN provides technical assistance, support, and

training to ensure that all school-aged students in Missouri have access to quality after-school

programs.

Funding

For over two centuries, Americans have relied upon libraries as a public benefit and supported them through public funds. Libraries provide essential services and serve lifelong needs and individual goals. The library plays a central and unique role in providing for and coordination of safe, desirable, after-school programs for children (Singer, 4). However many libraries are ill equipped to meet the overwhelming need of children through after-school programs. The shortage of funds is a critical issue for after-school programs. Most programs lack the base of government support that schools enjoy (Fokkena 29). Generally, after-school programs are not staffed by credentialed teachers and do not offer hourly wages and benefits normally paid to school personnel (Jacobson 3).

According to author Chrisanne L. Gayl, The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act held schools accountable for ensuring that students meet high standards; this makes the need for additional learning all the more important (Gayl 1). It was not until the mid-1990s that the federal government became involved in after-school programming. Many thought after-school programs were best left to community organizations (Gayl 2). NCLB Act gave validation in the form of an increase to the federal investment in after-school programs. This increase was spread over a six-year period through the 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) initiative. The 21st CCLC initiative is the only federal funding source dedicated exclusively to after-school programming. The NCLB Act reauthorized the 21st CCLC in 2002, shifting the management of the grants from the US Department of Education to the State Education Agencies. Each state receives funds based on its share of Title I funding for low-income students. The devolution of the 21st CCLC program to the states provided easier management

and a more proficient grant review process. It also allowed states to incorporate after-school

programs into their larger systems of education and to develop groundwork to sustain these

programs. The 21st CCLC initiative has spurred state and local investments in after-school

programs and helped influence funding to build sustainable after-school infrastructures

(Afterschool Alliance). This allows for community engagement since more organizations could

compete for funding (Gayl 03). The 21st CCLC initiative supports after-school programs that

provide academic enrichment activities that aid students in meeting local and state

achievement standards in addition to granting support of services designed to complement the

regular academic program. Currently, 39 states have started statewide after-school networks

to develop state-level supports and policies to ensure quality after-school programs. As of

fiscal year 2012, funding for 21st CCLC is 1.54 billion dollars, less than half of the 2.5 billion

authorized by the NCLB Act (Afterschool Alliance).

There is a variation of funds allocated per student ranging from $449 to $7,160 (Apsler

14; Gullotta, et al. 46). This variation can be attributed to differences in program size,

calculation of costs, and in-kind resources. It is also impacted by startup, operating, and system

building costs. These variances lead to a lack of funds available for after-school programs.

Gullotta, et al. recommend that research focus on to what extent quality programming is

associated to cost and what expenditures are required to improve existing programs (46). In

the state of Missouri, approximately 120,867 school-aged children participate in after-school

programs. This includes the almost 20,000 who attend 21st CCL Centers (Afterschool Alliance).

Currently, 349,506 Missouri students qualify to participate in 21st CCLC programs, but due to

lack of funding only 18,987 attend. President Obama proposed in his 2013 budget an additional

$825 million increase to the Child Care and Development Fund (Afterschool Alliance), but further financial support will be a necessity in order to promote success to quality after-school programs.

Fortunately, there are other funding opportunities available to those who offer after-school platforms. Funders and policy makers have recognized that quality after-school programs are not merely an extension of the school day (Hill xxi).   Many funders provide specifically dedicated funding that is expected to improve academic achievement among students by providing academic tutoring and homework help sessions (Fashola 74). This includes programs such as The Big Read, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), designed to restore reading to the center of American culture. The Big Read is intended for communities to come together to read and discuss one of many selections chosen from United States and world literature. The program grants funds to a variety of not-for-profit organizations. To date The Big Read has funded more than 1,000 Big Read programs and provided more than 14 million dollars in grants.

Another viable mode of attaining book donations is through The Scholastic Book Grant, which provides high-quality reading materials to children in need. Their goal is to ensure that each of its book donations has a significant impact on fostering literacy. Each year the company donates millions of books to a variety of organizations large and small. They distribute on two levels, large-scale donations of 100,000 books rewarded to organizations that demonstrate how they will creatively use the donation to meet children's literacy needs. The small-scale donations are awarded to literacy organizations that meet the tax-exempt qualifications.

The Dollar General Literacy Foundation Youth Literacy Grants provides funding for schools, public libraries, and nonprofit organizations. The funding is to aid the implementation of new or expanding literacy programs. It can also be used to purchasing new technology or equipment to support literacy initiatives or to purchase books, materials, or software for literacy programs.

The GTECH After - School Advantage Program puts education, youth, and technology at the forefront of their program. GTECH is a national community investment program providing non-profit community agencies with state of the art computer labs. Labs are designed to provide children aged 5-15 with meaningful, yet enjoyable learning experiences. The initiative is aimed at providing an educational experience and bridge the digital divide. GTECH donates up to $15,000 in state of the art computers, online technology, and computer software**.**

Media MashUp was an Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) funded Nation of Leaders Demonstration grant project designed to help libraries build capacity to offer computer-based programs for youth that help foster 21st Century literacy skills. In Media MashUp, "they meet youth where they are in their knowledge, interest, and understanding of media creation" (4). MediaMashUp provides youth an opportunity to be the best of their creative selves before a wide audience in both novel and familiar formats. A significant part of the Media MashUp project is devoted to developing a better understanding of the organizational change that needs to transpire in libraries to adapt to the emerging model of the early 21st century literacy needs (Media MashUp.nin.com).

A key aspect to receiving funding for after-school programming is evaluation. Robert Apsler concluded that while after-school programs may have a positive effect on participants,

evaluations that are more thorough are necessary to document this potential (5). All programs

receiving funding for application of services are required to show evidence that some type of

evaluation is part of the project. Evaluation should be built into an afterschool program

(Fashola 73). Evaluation is the exchanging of information and communication between those

involved in programming, including program implementers, evaluators, funders, policymakers,

and the public. In order to receive funding, program implementers are advised to conduct

research beginning with the initial proposal and to be able to report on this research. All

parties involved should be responsible to each other and be willing to share the findings with

the public. This will explain how dollars were spent in terms of program creation and

implementation as well as results and the effects of the program. As programs work toward

their goals, they should be expected to track progress and report results. These results

influence policy, administration, education, and research. These results provide valuable

information about the design, effects and affects of the program. In addition, results can be

used to eliminate or improve programs thus providing students with the most effective after-

school program possible. If after-school programs are evaluated properly, they will provide the

opportunity to influence and inform the educational world about the importance of additional

or extended learning opportunities beyond the school hours (Fashola 75). After-school

programs committed to the evaluation process know that proper evaluation is important if they

desire to accomplish program goals and accurately measure progress toward their

accomplishments.

Conclusion

After-school programs that offer academic support services complement academic activities in schools. Collaboration with school faculty, promoting curriculum, and offering educated, willing "tutors" are ingredients for a successful program, not just for literacy but also for all curriculum areas. Combining specific goals, structured programming based on educational techniques, and through frequent attendance, participants generate positive gains (Apsler 16). There are ways to link the school day to after-school time. One such way of linkage would be a liaison responsible for the communication and coordination of the program. Exchanging of information and the coordination of activities can be beneficial to students.

The library's role can be a critical component for young people during the after school hours. Libraries are convenient, often close, free, and safe and can offer activities that range from unstructured activities (study hall) to regular tutoring sessions to complete immersion into structured curricula. After-school programs are more flexible than school library programs and not bound by curriculum requirements. They promote positive youth development and can provide support for young people in non-academic realms (Hirsch 69).

CHAPTER 3
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study is to review the research literature regarding the effectiveness of after-school programs, focusing on those conducted in the public library, that emphasize reading support or homework assistance on student achievement. The following questions regarding student academic achievement in these programs are answered. Do structured reading opportunities held during after-school programs assist in reading advancement? Do formal after-school homework assistance programs increase student achievement? Is it important for the public library to integrate technology into after-school programming to enhance or assist student academic achievement? What can be done to ensure funding for effective after-school programs?

Reading Opportunities

Studies of after-school reading programs validate that some participants show improvement in reading ability. Flexibility and self-choice were seen to be a positive influence in engaging reading participants. Little and Hines (2006) suggest that children who read more tend to be stronger readers. Those participating in an after-school program with reading as its primary purpose are exposed to more reading time. This, in turn, presents students with the opportunity to increase reading skills.

Public libraries are in a position to offer literacy development not offered in a school library setting. Without the structure of school, participants read what interests them and make choices from a larger collection. Alvermann et al. (1999) noted that public libraries, when compared to school libraries, represent a distinct culture. The public library is more relaxed

with no attempt at regulation of reading material. In addition, public libraries offer activities

related to current reading material ensuring reading comprehension.

Homework Aid

According to Herr-Stephenson (2011), one in seven public libraries offer formal after-

school homework assistance. These programs offer assistance to participants to develop and

improve academic skills. The research discussed here does not take place in a public library,

but offers valuable insight to the effectiveness of such programs. According to one of the

studies, the assistance provided ELL students with the needed tutoring in order to correctly

complete the assigned homework, this confirms that after-school programs offer a place of

safety and create an unintimidating approach to academic assistance. The 1997 Gevirtz

Homework Project study reflected that more research needs to be conducted to effectively

discern if homework assistance programs do indeed lead to academic achievement. The

researchers note that after-school programs serve different functions for individual users.

Technology Integration

Technology literacy is crucial for success. Students need to know how to use the

technology in order to increase learning in academics and to increase student skills. Through

technology, students can deepen their understanding and make progress in learning how to

learn. Public libraries offer access to both technology and the Internet. However, they face

many challenges when providing access to technology, including cost of equipment and

equitable access. When providing after-school programs incorporating technology, librarians

must stay current and offer educated assistance to those in need.

Available Funds

It takes money to sustain an effective after-school program. Fokkenna (2011) notes that most after-school programs lack the government support that schools have. Although the 21st CCLC initiative allots funds to after-school programs, many programs need more to address community needs. Venues exist for requesting grants and donations, but the responsibility is left to the after-school programming staff to apply.

Evaluation is key to acquiring funds from grantees. Fashola (2002) states that evaluation needs to be built into after-school programs. This evaluation should be available to all parties in order to explain how funds are spent and to indicate where additional funds should be allocated. After-school programs using grant funds need to keep detailed records and conduct studies validating the effectiveness of the program, in turn proving the worth of the grant.

WORK CITED

"21st Century Community Learning Centers." *21st Century Community Learning Centers*. N.p.,

   n.d. Web. 23 Apr. 2013. <http://www.21stcclc.org/index.cfm?pageid=4242>.

Anderson, Richard C. *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading*.

   Washington, D.C: National Academy of Education, 1985. Print.

Afterschool Alliance. "21st Century Community Learning Centers Federal Afterschool Initiative."

   N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Mar. 2013.

Afterschool Alliance. "Working Families and Afterschool: A Special Report from America." N.p.,

   n.d. Web. 19 Mar. 2013.

Alvermann, Donna E., Josephine P. Young, Colin Green, and Joseph M. Wisenbaker.

   "Adolescents' Perceptions and Negotiations of Literacy in After-School Read and Talk

   Clubs. *JSTOR*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Mar. 2013

Apsler, Robert. "Afterschool Programs For Adolescents: A Review of Evaluation Research."

   Adolescence 44.173 (2009) *Academic Search Elite*. Web. 12 Mar. 2013

Bauer, Caroline Feller, and Richard Laurent. *Leading Kids to Books through Crafts*. Chicago:

   American Library Association, 2000. Print.

Cosden, Merith, and Gale Morrison. Homework Project Elementary. Rep. Gevirtz Research

   Center, n.d. Web. 08 June 2013.

   <http://education.ucsb.edu/grc/homeworkprojectelementary.htm>.

"Dollar General Literacy Foundation." *Dollar General Literacy Foundation*. N.p., n.d. Web. 23

   Apr. 2013. <http://www2.dollargeneral.com/dgliteracy/Pages/grant_programs.aspx>.

Edwards, Sue, Kathleen Martinez, and Mark Edwards. *Fun Literacy Activities for After-School Programs: Books & Beyond*. Nashville, Tenn: School-Age NOTES, 2004. Print.

"ExpandED Schools." (n.d.): n. pag. *ExpandED Schools*. Web. 19 Mar. 2013. <http://www.expandedschools.org/policy-documents/where-kids-are-digital-learning-class-and-beyond>.

Fashola, Olatokunbo S. *Building Effective After-School Programs*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin, 2002. Print.

Fokkena, Laura. "Moving Beyond Access: Class, Race, Gender, and Technological Literacy in Afterschool Programming." *Radical Teacher* 90 (2011): 25-34. *Academic Search Elite*. Web. 15 Apr. 2013

Gayl, Chrisanne L., "After-School Programs: Expanding Access And Ensuring Quality. PPI Policy Report." *Progressive Policy Institute* (2004): *ERIC*. Web. 21 Mar. 2013.

Gorman, Michele, Tricia Suellentrop, and Patrick Jones. *Connecting Young Adults and Libraries: A How-to-Do-It Manual*. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2009. Print.

GTECH After-School Advantage Program." GTECH Architects of Gaming. GTECH Corporation, n.d. Web. 26 May 2013. <www.gtech.com/about_gtech/proposal_guidelines.asp>.

Gullotta, Thomas P. *A Blueprint for Promoting Academic and Social Competence in After-School Programs.* Boston: Springer, 2009. Print.

Harvard Family Research Project." *Gevirtz Homework Project / Database / OST Database & Bibliography / Out-of-School Time / HFRP - Harvard Family Research Project*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Mar. 2013. <http://hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/gevirtz-homework-project>.

Herr-Stephenson, Becky. *Digital Media and Technology in Afterschool Programs, Libraries, and*

    Museums. Cambridge: MIT, 2011. Print.

Hill, Sara L. *Afterschool Matters: Creative Programs That Connect Youth Development and*

    Student Achievement. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, 2008. Print.

Hirsch, Barton J. "Learning and Development in After-School Programs." *Phi Delta Kappan* 92.5

    (2011): 66-69. *Academic Search Elite*. Web. 19 Mar. 2013.

Jacobson, Linda. "After-School Push Poses Complex Challenge." *Education Week* 27.1 (2007):20-

    21. *Academic Search Elite*. Web. 20 May 2013.

Kan, Katharine. *Sizzling Summer Reading Programs for Young Adults*. Chicago: American Library

    Association, 2006. Print.

Lauver, Sherri. "Supporting Student Success Through After-School and Expanded Learning

    Programs." *District Administration* 48.3 (2012): 40-43. *Academic Search Elite*. Web. 19

    Mar. 2013

Little, Catherine A., and Ashley H Hines. "Time to Read: Advancing Reading Achievement After

    School." *Journal of Advanced Academics* 18.1 (2006): 8-33. *Academic Search Elite*. Web.

    12 Mar 2013

Macias, et al. "When Homework is Not Home Work: After-School Programs For Homework

    Assistance." *Educational Psychologist* 36.3 (2001): 211-221. *Academic Search File Elite*.

    Web. 12 Mar. 2013

"Media MashUp." Media MashUp. N.p., n.d. Web. 03 Mar. 2013.

Mediaville, Cindy. "Homework Helpers." *School Library Journal* 49.3 (2003): 56. *Academic*

 Search Elite. Web. 19. Mar. 2013.

 "Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education." Afterschool Programs

 Technical   Assistance", n.d. Web. 05 May 2013.

 <http://dese.mo.gov/eel/exl/afterschool/afterschool_technical_assistance.htm>.

Nelson-Royles, Andrea M., and Gary L. Reglin. "After-School Tutoring For Reading Achievement

 And Urban Middle School Students." *Reading Improvement* 48.3 (2011): 105-117.

 Academic Search Elite. Web. 19 Mar. 2013

Pew Research Center. "Why Parents Love Libraries." The Digital Shift. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 May

 2013. <http://www.thedigitalshift.com/2013/05/k-12/pew-study-why-parents-love-

 libraries/>.

"Scholastic After School Learning Program | Funding Opportunities." *Scholastic After School*

 Learning Program | Funding Opportunities. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Mar. 2013.

Shernoff, David Jordan, and Deborah Lowe Vandell. "Engagement in After-School Program

 Activities: Quality of Experience from the Perspective of Participants." *Journal of Youth*

 and Adolescence 36.7 (2007): 891-903. Web. 19 Mar. 2013

Singer, Rebecca. "School-Age Children and The Public Library." *Journal Of Youth Services In*

 Libraries 13.1 (1999): 36-41 *Library Literature & Information Science Full Text*. Web 12

 Mar.2013

"The Big Read." *The Big Read*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Mar. 2013.

 <http://www.neabigread.org/faq.php>.

U.S. Department of Education "Technological Literacy: A National Priority." *ED.gov.*, n.d. Web.

    28 May 2013.

U.S. Department of Education. "Technology in After-School Programs." *Archived*. N.p., n.d.

    Web. 23 Apr. 2013.

    <http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/After_School_Programs/Technology_Programs.html>