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The Essential Components of the Afterschool Programming with K-8th Grade Targeted Service Students

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Abstract

The purpose of this quantitative research study was to examine the effectiveness regarding the essential components of the afterschool programming with K-8th grade targeted service students. This study also examined the effectiveness of afterschool programming interventions. Participants included 53 targeted services directors throughout the state of Minnesota. Results suggest rejecting all null hypotheses when examining the effectiveness of essential components of the afterschool programming with K-8th grade targeted service students. The study determined the areas of fostering positive relationships and understanding the needs and skills of youth were the most important components. Afterschool directors ranked professional development and parent involvement as the least important components. Interventions seen as being more crucial for a successful program were interventions for struggling readers and the interventions to target the student's individual needs. Interventions that were seen by afterschool directors as being most crucial for a successful program were academic and developmental skill building.

The results of this research are important because they identify practices used in afterschool programming to decrease the educational gaps for students in grades K-8. Based on these findings, further examination of effective components of afterschool programming for K-8th grade targeted service students is warranted.

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Chapter I: Introduction

In American public schools they have students that are hoping that their support system will not give up on them. They need caring and concerned adults in their lives, but also are eager to have teachers that are willing to make the effort to understand them and most importantly believe in them. According to Decuir (2014), this is the central, however covert, message our troubled youth are sending adults. The primary objective is to help students build their self-esteem, self-confidence and an internal sense of responsibility. It oftentimes takes years before they see the desired changes in the behaviors and attitudes of our more challenging youth (Decuir, 2014). Despite these ideas, and the increased funding that has accompanied them, little is known about how afterschool programs affect young people and which aspects of programs are most likely to result in positive outcomes for youth. They should be asking questions to determine the effect that programs have on the young people in our education system, such as, how does program participation affect youth? What factors are likely to lead to high quality, effective programs?

Currently, closing the achievement gap is one of the most significant challenges facing educators, researchers, and the nation. The achievement gap is defined as the difference in academic performance between specified groups of students, particularly low-income students and minority groups as compared to White and Asian students (Wixom, 2015). To resolve the achievement gap, President George Bush reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) on January 7, 2002, by signing into law the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). This act required students to be tested in reading and mathematics annually in grades

3-8 and once in grades 10-12. Schools were required to test students once in science during the following grade spans: 3rd–5th, 6th–8th, and 10th–12th. Test results for individual schools, school districts, and states were to be publicly reported collectively for all students and reported for specific student subgroups (i.e., low-income students, students with disabilities [SWD], English language learners, and racial and ethnic groups (Holbein & Ladd, 2015; NCLB, 2002).

As the federal government has become more involved in the education of America's youth, accountability has been taken to a higher level with legislation like NCLB. This initiative set forth legislation that aimed to have all children become proficient in reading and mathematics (Decuir, 2014). If a Title I school does not make Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) for three consecutive years, the district must offer Supplemental Educational Services (SES) to low-income students in that designated school district. This was only required if schools were persistently in the "needs improvement list." The school districts involved are required to reserve 20% of their Title I funds to support these services and school choice options. The NCLB (2001) legislation required states to evaluate SES providers in terms of their effectiveness in raising student achievement. There is much about the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that remains familiar from the No Child Left Behind Act, the previous version of the half-century old Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This includes mandatory state testing at certain grade levels, tagging and intervening in low-performing schools, and federal sign-off on state accountability plans. ESSA, passed with bipartisan support in congress, also offers the prospect of new flexibility and a lighter federal rein on how states shape the specifics in such contentious areas as teacher evaluation and the proper weighting of indicators that go into measuring school quality. The steps that states are taking to turn ESSA's blueprint into a finished structure and the

challenges of doing it by the time the bell rings for the 2017-18 school year (Education Week, 2017). School districts are being asked to increase student test scores, make annual yearly progress and improve extended academic programming for at-risk students, Title I, Targeted Services, tutoring, Supplemental Educational Services (SES), and summer school. Afterschool programming resources and teaching strategies need to be examined to assure they are effective and connected to all students.

Providing additional instructional time during the regular school day is difficult at best. As a result, schools are turning to afterschool programs to provide additional services needed by at-risk students to attain basic skills (Durlak & Weissberg, 2013). According to Huang and Dietel (2011), effective afterschool programs contribute to improved academic achievement, particularly among economically disadvantaged students. The Afterschool Alliance (2014) claimed links exist between afterschool programs, improved student engagement, commitment to homework, and parental involvement in school. Although academic failure has compound causes ranging from poverty to lack of parental involvement, experts believe the major cause is the lack of time available for mastering basic skills during the regular school day (Bodilly, 2010; Halpern, Heckman, & Larson, 2013; Moroney, Newman, Smith, McGovern, & Weikart, 2014).

The National Institute on Out-of-School Time (2016), research data, evaluations, and review of literature provides evidence that afterschool programs make a difference in lives of youth who attend. Teachers often face the challenge of differentiating their instruction in a classroom of students having a wide range of skill levels. Afterschool academic programming allows students who are behind to potentially make greater academic gains and increase motivation for learning due to the individualized, additional instruction. Afterschool programs

improve academic performance, social and developmental outcomes, contribute to healthy lifestyle options, and prevent many risky behaviors (National Institute on Out-of-School Time, 2017).

A review of afterschool programs conducted by the Afterschool Alliance (2016) suggested quality afterschool programs improved school attendance, engagement in learning, test scores, and grades. The first major area discussed the feelings and attitudes of students in afterschool programming. The second major area provided an overview of the increased indicators of behavior adjustment that include positive social behaviors and reduction in aggression, behavioral referrals and drug and alcohol use. The third major area was increased achievement test scores.

It is likely that there are specific afterschool program characteristics that promoted particular outcomes. For example, one program might be particularly effective in promoting math skills, while another builds children's motivation to learn and a third increased their ability to get along with peers. By examining a range of academic and non-academic outcomes, and linking these to program practices, the Efficacy to Effectiveness for Afterschool Programs study and survey questions are designed to build our understanding of the program goals, program practices, and outcomes for youth. Evidence has been mounting that sustained participation in a quality afterschool program, one which has strong connections to schools and to families, yields the best gains for program participants (Frazier, Mehta, Atkins, Hur, & Rusch, 2013). In addition to better supporting student success as described above, afterschool school partnerships can serve to strengthen, support, and even transform individual partners, resulting in improved program quality, more efficient use of resources, and better alignment of goals and curriculum

(Miller, 2005). Effective partnerships are those in which there is a shared value proposition, with each partner seeing the value added by working with the other entity. Partnerships with afterschool programming can help schools to:

- Provide a wider range of services and academic enrichment activities, that are not available during the traditional school day.
- Support transitions from middle to high school.
- Reinforce concepts taught in school.
- Gain access to mentors and afterschool staff to support in-school learning (Miller, 2005).

Given that the evidence is clear on the benefits of participation in afterschool and summer learning programs, why do not more schools and districts engage in expanded learning efforts that include afterschool and summer programming? It takes time, resources, and a commitment from both sides to make it work.

Afterschool programs which align with the school day curriculum can support student learning and attack the achievement gap by offering additional supports to struggling students that complement and reinforce learning that takes place in the classroom in new and exciting ways (Diedrich, McElvain, & Kaufman, 2005).

Various research delineates how people learn to read and provides best practices for teaching reading, via decades of work from the National Institute for Child Health and Development, the National Reading Panel, and others (Kim & White, 2008; Storch & Whitehurst, 2001; Wilkins, 2012).

Young people build skills, acquire passions, come to understandings and take on responsibilities for changing their worlds as they grow, learn, and develop. Practice suggests that young people are most likely to develop these strengths when they are connected to programs and organizations that have effective youth engagement strategies explicitly designed to address these core needs (Pittman, Martin, & Williams, 2007).

Positive youth outcomes are too important to leave to chance. While each program is unique, the need for intentional program design is universal. Programs must identify their desired youth outcomes and directly connect program activities to those goals.

The afterschool opportunity gap exists across Minnesota. Research shows that regular engagement in high-quality afterschool programs - at least three times a week - is associated with a wide array of improved developmental and academic outcomes for youth (Rodriguez, 2017). There are income and race-based disparities in access to afterschool learning opportunities in Minnesota. The Minnesota Student Survey results showed that 51% of low-income Minnesota youth regularly participate in afterschool, compared to 69% of their higher income peers (Rodriguez, 2017). Survey data explained that 55% of youth of color regularly participate in afterschool programming, compared to 67% of their White peers (Rodriguez, 2017). The greatest disparities exist for Hmong, Latino, and Somali youth.

Although many afterschool settings are designed primarily to provide a safe place for students to be outside of the traditional school day while parents work, there is now a broader movement toward using afterschool programs to bridge the gap between high- and low-achieving students and to give students more time to learn if they need it (Hofferth, 2001). Academically oriented out-of-school programs and services are promising because students

spend twice as much of their waking hours outside of the classroom as in it (Hofferth, 2001). Afterschool periods, especially summer breaks, are the times when the achievement gap widens (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007; Heyns, 1978; Little, 2010). Afterschool programs offer a promising approach to enhancing students' academic skills and to closing the achievement gap. Structured programming that is intentional and specifically targets clear goals and outcomes is a central component of numerous studies examining the features of quality afterschool programs (Little, 2008).

Equally important, the afterschool field is benefitting from a steady flow of increasingly nuanced evaluations that have been providing information to address seven key questions that are critically important if it is to continue to grow and provide high quality services. The following questions could help to invite others into a conversation about what the learning agenda for the field might contain and prioritize:

- What works for whom, when, where, and why?
- What doesn't work?
- What are the elements of high-quality programs and activities?
- How do the elements work together to achieve the desired youth outcomes?
- What internal program organizational and leadership characteristics and processes are necessary to develop and maintain quality services?
- What policy, funding, and infrastructure supports are necessary for high quality at scale?

- How can and do afterschool programs fit together with schools, digital media, and other learning supports to offer coordinated, accessible, and seamless opportunities (Durlak, Mahoney, Bohnert, & Parente, 2010)?

Literacy in its traditional sense has always been linked to reading and writing; however, the list of subjects associated with the term literacy has become much more expansive in recent years. No longer does literacy simply refer to the comprehension of the written word. In the 21st century, literacy connotes an intense knowledge of any particular field of interest. Those who are STEM-literate are particularly adept at understanding the worlds of science, technology, engineering and math, while those who maintain financial literacy are able to manage their personal investments and savings. In the same way that literacy's meaning has expanded in recent years, so too has the push to broaden academic experiences beyond simply comprehension and vocabulary. The new global, high-tech marketplace demands intense creativity and thinking that goes beyond basic learning skills and propels students to a fuller understanding of society.

Despite the growing importance of 21st century skills such as critical thinking and global awareness, the ability to comprehend written text is still an essential building block to learning and development (Little, Wimer, & Weiss, 2008). Even as doors are being opened for more well-off students to expand their minds beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic, many students continue to struggle to develop a strong command of written text not only in elementary and middle school, but also into their high school and even adult years. At its core, literacy is the use of written information to function in society, attain goals and develop knowledge (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003). Without this tool, a student will almost inevitably struggle with other forms of learning. Whether solving a complex word problem or learning

about the Revolutionary War, literacy is an absolute necessity to furthering learning and development.

Statement of Problem

Afterschool teachers lack a clear understanding of the components essential for effective afterschool programs (Fisher & Tipton, 2014). Across the country, educators and advocates developed a wide range of out-of-school programs and may vary on many dimensions. They take place afterschool, in the summer, or outside the school entirely. Extended academic programs serve different age groups for different lengths of time. The array of educational opportunities is what is important. It is likely there is not one single model that will work for all ages, or even within a certain age group, to serve all of what young people need (Anderson, 2010).

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) the measure by which schools, districts, and states are held accountable for student performance under the Title I of the No Child Behind Act of 2001 (Lauer, 2006). The definition of a school that does not make AYP is not consistent across states (Lauer, 2006). To expand and coordinate extended academic programming, data showing which areas students are excelling at and what areas of improvement that are needed to have them achieve at their highest level possible.

Researchers have already begun to examine the relationship between learning outside of the classroom and student academic achievement. Education reformers have principally targeted the classroom paying relatively little attention to what goes on during out of school hours. Education reformers are beginning to focus on closing the achievement gaps with extended academic programming, tutoring, summer school and other innovative programs that occur outside of the regular school day.

Policy makers, program directors and parents have attested to the widespread benefits of afterschool programs (Afterschool Alliance, 2011a). A wide variety of research ranging from polls to field observations has corroborated the need for afterschool enrichment. Promoting quality in the field of afterschool, which includes before school and summer learning programs, is one way to ensure researchers continue to find positive outcomes that can convince policy makers to increase investments in this valuable resource to children and parents. While goals and outcomes differ from program to program, quality afterschool programs show positive results in the realms of academics, behavior, family and social life.

Without the structure and supervision of focused and intentional programming, participants in afterschool programs can, at best, fail to achieve positive outcomes and, at worst, begin to perform worse than their peers (Pearson, Russell, & Reisner, 2007; Vandell, 2006). In fact, some research finds that when youth are concentrated together without appropriate structure and supervision, problematic behavior follows. This suggests that focused, intentional activities with appropriate structure and supervision are necessary to keep youth on an upward trajectory and out of trouble (Jacob & Lefgren, 2003). One of the primary conclusions of the Study of Promising Afterschool Programs was that, as compared to non-participants, students from age 6 to 18 benefit from an array of afterschool experiences that include quality afterschool programs as well as other structured school- and community-based activities supervised by adults. Specifically, researchers found that, in comparison to a less-supervised group, school-age children who frequently attended high-quality afterschool programs, alone and in combination with other supervised activities, displayed better work habits, task persistence, social skills, and

academic performance, and less aggressive behavior at the end of the school year (Vandell, 2006).

Youth are more likely to realize the benefits of programs if they develop positive relationships with the program's staff, and staff can only build these positive relationships through positive, quality interactions with youth. Research and evaluation efforts are beginning to identify how high-quality staffing and relationships can be achieved. For example, a follow-up study of the Treatment Assessment Screening Center (TASC) evaluation found that specific staff practices helped create the development of positive relationships between staff and students (Birmingham, Russell, Pechman, & Mielke, 2005).

Looking across program sites for middle schoolers, evaluators found that positive relationships were found in sites where staff: a) modeled positive behavior, b) actively promoted student mastery of the skills or concepts presented in activities, c) listened attentively to participants, d) frequently provided individualized feedback and guidance during activities, and e) established clear expectations for mature, respectful peer interactions (Birmingham, Russell, Pechman, & Mielke, 2005).

Staff and youth surveys and observations were conducted at five of Philadelphia's Beacon Centers (school-based community centers that include a range of afterschool opportunities) to understand three questions: a) What conditions lead youth to want to attend an activity, b) What aspects of an afterschool activity lead youth to be highly engaged? and c) What conditions lead youngsters to feel that they have learned in an activity? Based on the responses of 402 youth surveys, 45 staff surveys and 50 activity observations, two staff practices emerged as critical to youth engagement: effective group management to ensure that youth feel respected

by both the adults and the other youth and positive support for youth and their learning processes (Grossman, Campbell, & Raley, 2007).

In their meta-analysis of 73 afterschool programs' impacts, Durlak and Weissberg (2007) found that positive impacts on academic, prevention, and developmental outcomes were concentrated in the programs that utilized strategies characterized as sequenced, active, focused, and explicit. The researchers found that, as a group, programs missing any of these four characteristics did not achieve positive results. This points to the importance of targeting specific goals and designing activities around those goals intentionally. Programs can better implement intentional, focused programming by promoting high levels of organization within program activities. For instance, in the evaluation of the CORAL Initiative, researchers at Public/Private Ventures found that the highest quality activities took place when staff provided youth with clear instructions, delivered organized lessons, employed specific strategies designed to motivate and challenge youth, and had activities prepared for youth who finished activities before others. Having systems in place to manage youth behavior was also key (Arbreton, Goldsmith, & Shelton, 2005).

The achievement gap among students persists today despite the best efforts of both school-day educators and afterschool, before-school and summer learning program providers. While schools are doing their best to provide specialized instruction for struggling students and expanded learning programs continue to target those most in need with stimulating and engaging enrichment opportunities, more needs to be done among America's most disadvantaged communities to ensure that children are receiving a comprehensive education to catch up with their peers (McCombs, 2017).

Several afterschool programs are not explicitly designed to "teach" reading as such; they may not typically have personnel and/or the expertise to take on such a task. Appropriate interventions can still be effectively used by program staff to help students maintain or enhance their reading skills. The key is to design the right kind of summer and afterschool programs as delineated by research. Afterschool and summer learning programs can, in fact, easily infuse reading into activities that children and youth enjoy. Reading skills are strengthened with well-designed and explicit instructional interventions, these programs can serve to link children's interests with literacy development by simply getting them to read more broadly, consistently, and intensively in pursuit of their interests (Afterschool Alliance, 2011c).

Afterschool support staff play a critical role in providing a bridge of vital supports and opportunities for students during the afterschool hours. The results from a recent survey found that nearly 80% of youth workers are satisfied with their jobs, but low wages significantly impact the high turnover rate in this field (Yohalem & Pittman, 2006). Increases in wages and access to benefits could stabilize the workforce and advance the profession. Salary is the number one factor that influences people's decision to leave a job over demographics, status, job satisfaction, or place of employment (Yohalem & Pittman, 2006). The out-of-school-time field lacks a national professional development system. Several statewide initiatives are in pursuit of building components for a statewide system. Although it is generally assumed that afterschool programs can provide students with positive, academically enriching experiences, it is not necessarily known how to structure programs to effectively improve student academic outcomes. Although many studies lacking comparison groups suggest that afterschool programs can benefit students

academically, those with more rigorous evaluation designs raise questions about these findings (Fashola,1998; Ferreira, 2004; Sheldon & Hopkins, 2008).

In line with the discussion of program academic and skill development, the ability of afterschool programs to carry out each practice satisfactorily is an ongoing and iterative process. Granger (2008) stated, "In the afterschool field, it is tempting to characterize a program as being of high or of low quality...it is more appropriate to consider quality as something that varies within a program, with many programs...being more effective in one area than another" (p. 7).

The achievement gap in the United States is a well-documented issue that pervades every aspect of society, and one of its essential cogs is the disconnect in reading and writing achievement between low-income children and those from more affluent backgrounds. By comparison, children from low-income families start off at an immense disadvantage in terms of literacy development. First graders from lower-income families have a vocabulary half the size of children from higher-income families. By the age of 3, children in low-income homes will have heard one-third as many words as children in middle/high income homes, 10 million versus 30 million words (Association of Small Foundations, 2008).

The numbers are even more troubling for low-income students and students of color. Only 18 percent of black fourth graders, 21 percent of Hispanic fourth graders and 21 percent of lower-income fourth graders — who are eligible for the National School Lunch Program — demonstrated proficiency in reading on the 2015 NAEP assessment (Business Roundtable, 2016).

Different studies from across the country point to one fact: if students are not proficient in reading by third grade, they are highly likely to lag in eighth grade and ninth grade, disengage

from school and eventually not complete high school. Lesnick (2010) conducted a study by the University of Chicago, "found if intervention is delayed until after third grade, 75 percent of those children will continue to have difficulties learning to read throughout high school and into their adult years" (p. 6).

Educators and researchers, in an effort to identify early warning signs of dropping out, have linked failure to read proficiently by the end of third grade with failure to graduate from high school. According to Feister, up until the end of third grade most students are learning to read. Beginning in fourth grade, however, they are reading to learn, using their skills to gain more information in subjects such as math and science, to solve problems, to think critically about what they are learning, and to act upon and share that knowledge in the world around them (2010).

A national report released in 2012 confirms this link between third grade reading proficiency and graduation. The report is based on a longitudinal study of nearly 4,000 students from across the country. They found that those who do not read proficiently by the end of third grade are four times more likely to leave school without a diploma than proficient readers. For the most challenged readers, those who could not master even the basic skills by third grade, the rate is nearly six times greater. This issue is even more telling for students coming from low-income households (Hernandez, 2012).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of afterschool programming for K-8th grade targeted service students.

Research Questions

The study attempted to explore the following research questions:

RQ1: Based on afterschool directors' perceptions, what components determine the effectiveness of after-school programming for K-8th grade targeted service students?

RQ2: Based on afterschool directors' perceptions, which of those RQ1 components rank most highly in order of importance?

RQ3: Based on afterschool directors' perceptions, what components determine the effectiveness of interventions for students who participate in afterschool programming for K-8th grade targeted service students?

RQ4: Based on afterschool directors' perceptions, which of those RQ3 components rank most highly in order of importance?

Significance of the Study

It has been stressed that 21st century skills that include critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, information literacy, media literacy, technology literacy, flexibility, and leadership are important skills to have success. Schwartz (2006) pointed out that afterschool learning programs are emerging as one of the nation's most promising strategies for preparing young people for the workforce and civic life. They have the limits of priorities; especially with the onset of the No Child Left Behind Act (2002), schools focus on teaching the basics of math and reading and have less incentive to incorporate 21st century skills. Schwartz

(2006) stated that afterschool programs are an untapped resource with three competitive advantages. First, they enable students to work collaboratively in small groups, a setup on which the modern economy will increasingly rely. Second, they are well suited to project-based learning and the development of mastery. Third, they allow students to learn real life-long skills that make sense. The afterschool sector is fraught with challenges. It lacks focus; is it childcare, public safety, homework tutoring?

The best afterschool programs capitalize on the advantages that afterschool hours offer compared to the school day (Afterschool Alliance, 2011a). These advantages include a greater opportunity to actively involve youth on a daily basis, teaching youth to transition to the next step on the ladder of success. For these programs, career programming may not represent yet another new set of activities to add to the curriculum. Instead, these programs may simply need to ensure that youth understand, and can articulate, how the skills they are learning can help them in the future. For instance, an evaluation of the AfterSchool Matters Initiative in Chicago indicated that having skills is not enough; youth have to understand and be able to communicate how the skills they learn will transfer to the workplace (Alexander & Hirsch, 2012). The evaluators found that several youth either did not know that skills they developed in afterschool programs "counted" as work skills or could not explain how those skills would help them in the workplace (Alexander & Hirsch, 2012). Out-of-School Time (OST) programs need to be sure youth understand what transferable skills are and to clearly articulate how the skills developed in the program will help them succeed in the next step on the ladder. Many of the programs observed were organized around a substantive area, such as urban farming, technology, or entrepreneurship. As the AfterSchool Matters evaluation showed, explicitly teaching youth to

articulate what they have learned may be an important component of youth programming (Alexander & Hirsch, 2012).

A Continual Learning Plan (CLP) must be developed jointly by ALC staff and regular school staff for each learner in the program (Minnesota State-Approved Program Resource Guide, 2020). The CLP should be developed for the entire year and include services for both the alternative and traditional programs. Criteria is listed under Minnesota Statutes 124D.128, Subdivision 3. The district must develop a continual learning plan with the pupil. A district must allow a minor pupils parent or guardian to participate in developing the plan, if the parent or guardian wants to participate. Outcomes, instructional strategies, and outcome assessments for the extended time must interface with the regular school time. The district must develop a continual learning plan with the pupil. A district must allow a minor pupil's parent or guardian to participate in developing the plan, if the parent or guardian wants to participate. The plan must identify the learning experiences and expected outcomes needed for satisfactory credit for the year and for graduation. The plan must be updated each year under Minnesota Statutes section 126C.05.Subdivision15 (b)(i). The plan must identify the learning experiences and expected outcomes needed for satisfactory credit for the year and for graduation. The plan must be updated each year under Minnesota Statutes section 126C.05.Subdivision15 (b)(i). The continual learning plan (CLP) should be developed for the entire year and include services for both the alternative and traditional programs. Criteria are listed in Minnesota Statutes 124D.128, Subdivision 3. Program outcomes for both the ALC extended program and regular school program must address the broad needs of the learners, not just basic academic needs. The intent of this condition is so remediation will not be the sole focus. The programs and services of a

center must focus on academic and learning skills, applied learning opportunities, trade and vocational skills, work-based learning opportunities, work experience, youth service to the community and transition services.

With a better sense of what makes a quality program, afterschool advocates are able to craft specific policy recommendations that support the movement toward quality afterschool for all (Afterschool Alliance, 2014). Afterschool Alliance of 2014 research has began to explore the relationship between quality after-school programming and the enhanced academic outcomes sought by schools and districts. As program coordinators worked to add academic components to the after-school enrichment and developmental opportunities already offered, they face the expectation that these programs will contribute to participants' academic success, both in the classroom and on high-stakes tests. While the debate continues on whether or not after-school programs can or should be held accountable for academic gains, the need for quality programming, regardless of its focus, is widely apparent.

A critical component of the success of expanded learning opportunities is hiring the right staff. From an afterschool and summer perspective, this means hiring staff who have legitimacy in the school building and who are skilled at building relationships with school staff. One way to do this is to hire licensed teachers, who "speak the same language" as school-day teachers, can substitute and consult in classrooms, and can participate in professional development activities. Hiring licensed teachers who also teach at a host school facilitates information-sharing and forges connections with other teachers who might not otherwise make time for "outside" programs or services. From a school perspective, it means encouraging school-day teachers to consider working as part of an afterschool or summer learning team, on which they bring their

content expertise to bear to support and reinforce the development critical learning skills. Expanded learning opportunities benefit from having a staff member, either employed by the school or the afterschool program or shared across both, whose primary responsibility is to coordinate resources among partners, create learning plans for students based on those resources, and facilitate communications and relationship-building. In addition to a designated staff member, expanded learning opportunities should encourage school and program staff alike to participate in governance and leadership committees as well as grade-level and content-specific teams in order to be fully integrated partners.

A consistently reported feature of a strong collaboration is the ability of partners to access information and data from each other, including, if possible, student-level academic data (e.g., test scores and grades). Afterschool and summer programs can use these data both to track and strengthen student performance and to demonstrate the impact of their services. This data-driven approach to student learning is sometimes difficult due to privacy concerns about sharing student-level data; however, getting data from districts by student ID number, rather than by name, can help overcome this obstacle. In addition to getting data from schools, some programs provide their own data to schools to promote reciprocal data sharing.

Another way to support reciprocity of data sharing is to offer to analyze the data regularly provided by schools and districts and feed them back the results, highlighting any improvements that might be attributable to the program. District-level support and connections greatly facilitate data-sharing, either through a formal letter or Memorandum of Understanding or through informal relationships with key district staff. District support can often trickle down to school buildings and principals to help program staff get report cards, attendance data, and teacher

reports on student progress. But, even if sharing official school data is not possible due to privacy and other concerns, it is still important for school and afterschool and summer staff to have some mechanisms in place for sharing information about students and curriculum to ensure that what happens during the school day is complemented and reinforced by what occurs during expanded learning time. Extra time for academics by itself may be necessary but not sufficient to improve academic outcomes. Balancing academic support with a variety of engaging, fun, and structured extracurricular or co-curricular activities that promote youth development in a variety of real-world contexts appears to support and improve academic performance.

Definition of Terms

- Academic and Developmental Skill Building - helping students develop to their fullest potential by using their skills and knowledge to perform in school now so they may also perform professionally in the workplace later on in life (Flook, 2017).
- Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): A measurement defined by the NCLB Act. It indicates if a school or system is performing academically according to the state's standardized tests. AYP is the amount of annual achievement growth to be expected by students in a particular school, district, or state in the U.S. federal accountability system (Wikipedia).
- Afterschool Program: A program that takes place immediately following the school day. It may include academics, enrichment, homework help, or recreational activities (Afterschool Alliance, 2011b).
- At-Risk Students: Students who are in danger of failing or dropping out of school (Cumming & Rodriquez, 2019).

- Continual Learning Plan (CLP): All students enrolled in a State-Approved Alternative Program must have an annually updated CLP that addresses their learning objectives and experiences, assessment measurements and requirements for grade level progression. Specific statute requirements can be found in: Minnesota Statute 124D.128 or in the CLP section of the Minnesota State Approved Program Resource Guide (Minnesota State-Approved Program Resource Guide, 2020).
- Home/School Link - communication/connection between home and school (National Center for Families Learning, 2015).
- Measurable and Lasting Learning - knowledge or skills that students will walk away after completing a course. Learning outcomes are clear and assessable statements that define what a student is able to do at the completion of a course (Anderson, Krathwohl, Airasian, Cruikshank, Mayer, Pintrich, Raths, & Wittrock, 2000).
- Parent Involvement - the amount of participation a parent has when it comes to schooling and their child's life (Child Trends, 2016).
- Positive Staff/Student Relationships - promote a sense of school belonging and encourage students to participate cooperatively. Students develop confidence to experiment and succeed in an environment where they are not restricted by the fear of failure (Hattie, 2015).
- Small Class Size - the number of students in a given course or classroom, specifically either (1) the number of students being taught by individual teachers in a course or classroom or (2) the average number of students being taught by teachers in a school, district, or education system (Glossary of Education Reform, 2015).

- Student Achievement: Academic achievement of students as measured by standardized test scores in language arts, math and science (Stronge, 2010).
- Students with Disabilities (SWD): Students with an identified disability who may need additional specialized instruction to meet their educational goals (Branco, 2019).
- Supplemental Instruction - a nontraditional form of tutoring that focuses on collaboration, group study, and interaction for assisting students in specific coursework (Stone, Jacobs, 2008).
- Targeted Services (TS): Out of School time elementary and middle/junior high-level program for at-risk students. Programming occurs on an extended day/year basis. Only ALCs can apply to provide Targeted Services. Students must have a CLP and services must be provided year-round (Minnesota State-Approved Program Resource Guide, 2020).

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 consists of the following sections: statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, significance of study, definition of terms, and organization of study. Chapter 2 reviews and summarizes research from journals and other credible sources. This literature review is composed of the following sections: introduction, components of effective afterschool programs, effective interventions of afterschool programs, 21st century community learning centers afterschool programming, and afterschool instruction strategies. Chapter 3 presents the methodology for this study and includes the following sections: purpose of the study, theoretical conceptual framework, research questions, hypotheses, instrument/measures, sampling design, data collection, procedures, data

analysis, reliability, validity, trustworthiness, limitations, assumptions, and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 presents the findings related to the inquiry questions. Chapter 5 summarizes the results of this study and includes the following sections: final analysis, implications for educational practice, implications for further research, references, and appendices.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the essential components and interventions used in afterschool programming with K-8th grade students. The first section of this review focuses on the effectiveness of afterschool programming. The second section examines the effectiveness of interventions for students who participate in afterschool programming.

Introduction

Afterschool programming has been the heart of the supplemental service provision of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which has taken on increasing significance in the implementation of the historic federal law (Peterson, 2005). The United States legislation (Public Law 107-110), which includes provisions intended to close the student achievement gap (all students reach 100% achievement in reading and math), seeks to hold public schools accountable for achieving standards of proficiency, sets standards of excellence for every child, and seeks to place a qualified teacher in every classroom. Schools that do not meet their progress targets for two consecutive years will be identified as "needing improvement" and must give students the option to attend other schools. After three failing years, schools must offer students supplemental educational services, including private tutoring. Continued failure could lead to a restructuring or closing of a low-achieving school. NCLB is widely considered by both supporters and detractors to be the most ambitious effort to raise achievement levels in public schools since former President Lyndon Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Federal government responsibilities in education have always been limited. The word “education” does not even appear in the U.S. Constitution. States and local school districts have

always made the day-to-day decisions about instruction, teachers, and textbooks. Today the federal government funds only about 7% of the nation's K-12 education bill, and its share has never exceeded 10% (Loveless & Ravitch, 2000). The small slice of federal funding for education goes mostly to categorical programs. The two largest serve Title I and special education students. The vast majority of American children do not qualify for these or any other categorical program. For most students in most schools, only a penny or two of each education dollar can be traced back to Washington (Loveless & Ravitch, 2000). States and schools could refuse to take that funding and decide not to participate in NCLB and ESSA.

With the rapidly changing educational climate resulting from the new federal statutes, there is an opening for research exploring solutions to the challenge of enhancing student academic performance. A growing concern among educators is that the lessons taught to students will be so geared towards success on the standardized exams that it will hamper the students' epistemological skills, which are traditionally built through more interactive, creative topics and learning techniques. Students attending schools with high proportions of lower income and minority students are most at risk of performing poorly on such standardized tests. These schools can be expected to place the most effort on preparing students to perform highly on assessment preparation that is likely to take the form of practice testing and memorization drills (Data Quality Campaign, 2016). Such a focus may exclude activities and learning experiences that are most likely to excite students. By failing to take consideration of student motivation and engagement in learning into account, high-stakes testing policies may be failing to engage students who are most likely to drop out of school (Data Quality Campaign, 2016).

On December 10, 2015, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law. ESSA requires states to spend 20% of their funding on "well-rounded" educational opportunities (Devaney & Maroney, 2015). The new legislation also supports school and community partnerships; continued funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, increased support for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program and increased support for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and family engagement. Two federal acts that support SEL as a core component of schooling were introduced in early 2015: 1. The Supporting of Social and Emotional Learning Act calls for greater research on the impact of SEL and greater training and professional development for teachers on how to implement SEL practices. 2. The Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act defines SEL and call for greater training and professional development for educators. At the same time, afterschool researchers, funders, and practitioners also have demonstrated a growing interest in the importance of supporting social and emotional development in programs that take place outside of school.

ESSA requires states to disaggregate student data in new ways so that policymakers and the public can better understand how schools are serving our students, including those from more vulnerable populations. Under ESSA, states are responsible for setting the minimum number of students needed to form a student subgroup for federal reporting and accountability purposes. This report recommends that states set their class sizes to 10 or fewer students, to maximize the amount of student support and engagement. This will ensure that states identify student subgroups with low academic performance and/or low high school graduation rates and provide targeted interventions to support the schools those students attend.

Components of Effective Afterschool Programs

Research provides evidence that parent and family involvement in after-school programs increases students' achievement and success (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Children achieve more when their parents are involved. This is regardless of socio-economic status, ethnic background, or parents' education level (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Parents face many obstacles that prevent them from taking an active role in their child's afterschool programs. One major challenge to successful parent involvement in afterschool programs is the lack of communication between afterschool staff and parents. Frequent communication from afterschool staff may increase parents' desire to become more involved in their child's after-school program. Afterschool directors employ multiple strategies to engage parents in their child's after-school activities (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Included are:

- recognizing that parents, regardless of income, education level, or cultural background, genuinely care about their children's learning and want their children to do well in school.
- creating programs that provide support to families as they guide their children through learning experiences from preschool to high school.
- working with families to build their social and political connections.
- linking family and community engagement efforts to student leadership.
- focusing efforts on activities that will build trust and respect among families and community members.

According to Peterson (2005), the financial conflict of interest is clear: school districts are given the authority to monitor afterschool education vendors even while acting as vendors

themselves. How this power struggle will evolve, and whether students will benefit, remains unknown. The accountability provisions of NCLB do not contain any mechanism for ensuring that students profit from afterschool programs, mainly because states are focusing more on overall school performance than on the performance of individual students. Fusco (2008) reported that children have greater opportunities to develop in afterschool than in school, and these patterns were consistent across gender, ethnicity, and age. The study has implications for creating learning environments where development is not only possible but likely for all children.

After-school programs have multiple goals, including improving outcomes in academic performance, promoting positive development, and preventing delinquency, substance use, and other problem behaviors (Gottfredson, 2004). While diverse in their components, after-school programs typically provide some combination of academic support, recreation, mentoring, health promotion, and social and emotional skill training. Many programs aim to increase positive social bonds with pro-social peers, parents, other adults, and program staff. Evidence suggests that after-school programs are most beneficial for youth experiencing academic difficulties or for youth with common developmental problems (Riggs & Greenberg, 2004). Evaluating the effects of after-school programs poses unique challenges to social work practitioners, administrators, and researchers. Studies indicate that problem behaviors such as delinquency and aggression are reduced among children who receive after-school programming (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Gottfredson, 2004; Hudley, 1999). Specific findings suggest that participation in after-school programs leads to significant reductions in self-reported substance abuse, improved drug refusal skills, and increased pro-social attitudes toward drug use (LoSciuto, 1999; St. Pierre, 1997).

Participation in afterschool programs is also associated with improvements in academic performance in a number of studies (Halpern, 1999; Lauer, 2006; Mahoney, 2005). Youth who attend afterschool programs have better rates of school attendance, higher reading achievement scores, and elicit greater teacher expectancy of student success than at-risk youth who do not attend afterschool (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Fabiano, 2005; Fashola & Cooper, 1999; LoSciuto, 1999; Mahoney, 2005).

Research conducted by the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement at the University of Minnesota Extension in 2014 examined the perspectives of both afterschool and education leaders toward Social Emotional Learning (SEL) (Devaney & Moroney, 2015). In responding to a survey, approximately 1,400 afterschool and school leaders from across Minnesota revealed that they generally agreed that social and emotional skills can be taught and are an important part of a young person's success. However, their approaches differed dramatically in how central they see SEL to their school or program's mission.

Afterschool leaders were much more likely than regular education leaders to say that teaching SEL was central to their mission. Afterschool programming may be the ideal place to fulfill the SEL promise in collaboration with schools.

Smith, Roderick and Degener (2006), professionals in a growing out-of-school-time field, argued that participation in organized programs supports students' success in school in several ways. They do so by providing a range of protective and enrichment experiences that uniquely assist children's individual development (Smith, Roderick, & Degener, 2006). The Afterschool Alliance took on the task of constructing a roadmap for afterschool programming. Led by Rhinehart (2009) at the Harvard School of Public Health, the roadmap assessed, for the first

time, the nation's current investment in afterschool programs from the public sector, parents, foundations, and businesses, and estimates the additional investment needed from each sector to provide quality afterschool programs for all children. It recommended a well-orchestrated partnership across sectors, reflecting a societal commitment to ensuring that all students have access to quality afterschool programs. Policymakers, program directors, and parents have attested to the widespread benefits of afterschool programs (Smith, Roderick & Degener, 2006). A wide variety of research ranging from quantitative studies and polls to qualitative reports and field observations has corroborated the need for afterschool enrichment. As the field grows and resources thin out, especially given the economic recession and subsequent budget cuts, it is increasingly important to secure afterschool programming as a necessity for youth. Promoting quality in the field of afterschool, which includes before school and summer learning programs, is one way to ensure researchers continue to find positive outcomes that can convince policy makers to increase investments in this valuable resource to children and parents. While goals and outcomes differ from program to program, quality afterschool programs show positive results in the realms of academics, behavior, family and social life. Results from quality programs demonstrate the benefits of afterschool programming.

In order to promote program quality, program characteristics associated with proven outcomes must be identified so that the field has tangible standards for which to strive. With a better sense of what makes a quality program, afterschool advocates are able to craft specific policy recommendations that support the movement toward quality afterschool for all (Palmer, 2009).

Effective Interventions of Afterschool Programs

Some afterschool programs have demonstrated positive long-term effects on academic achievement (Fabiano, 2005). After-school participants indicate that they frequently receive greater emotional and developmental support in after-school settings than they do in traditional school settings (Kahne, 2001). Studies have also found positive impacts on character development (Gottfredson, 2004) as well as significant improvements in social and emotional skills among after-school participants (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Mahoney, 2005).

Intervention components included in after-school programs vary widely; however, certain program elements have been identified as most likely to produce positive outcomes in children and youth. A recent review of the effects of after-school programs suggests that structured programs are more effective than unstructured socialization or recreation approaches (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). Programs that use evidence-based practices to promote academic success yield better outcomes than other programs. Skill training and character development strategies are also important components of effective after-school programs. Conducting program-based research in after-school program settings is challenging. One immediate limitation inherent in the evaluation of after-school programs involves the pervasive problem of assigning youth to receive or not receive programming. Relying on youth to voluntarily enroll in after-school programs introduces an evaluation selection bias and leads to questions about whether program effects are due to the interventions that are provided or to high levels of motivation among voluntary participants. Variations in program approaches, structure, and exposure create challenges in assessing program impact because it is difficult to determine fidelity of programming and mechanisms of change among multi-modal programs.

To build a culture of participation, out-of-school time (OST) providers, educators, planners, and advocacy groups need to partner with youth, engaging them in projects that are meaningful to them, to the adults who support them, and to their communities. Involving young people in action-based research builds their citizenship skills and their general social competence at school, at work, and in their communities (Paris & Winn, 2014; VeLure, Roholt, Baizerman, & Hildreth, 2014). Action-based research facilitated program accountability and improvement. In keeping with the implicit commitment of action-based research to social and cultural justice through this approach, youth generated solutions to common problems that transpired. Such a process can be used for personal and professional development by youth and by adult program staff (Fusco, 2012). When implemented by a civic youth worker collaborating with young people, action-based research can provide data for program development and evaluation while, at the same time, teaching young people citizenship skills: thinking, analyzing, organizing, and acting on issues of importance and interest to them. As the challenges facing our communities become more global and complex, we need to encourage and motivate young people to exercise real citizenship (Checkoway, Richards, & Schuster, 2004). Action-based research can be a platform for democracy in action, engaging youth and adults in discussions that lead to collaborative work on common issues in order to improve their lives and the life of their communities. Such engagement is an important antidote to the image of youth as apathetic. Young people are allies in crucial discussions and joint action on problems that affect communities. When young people are treated as part of the solution, we encourage positive behavior on the part of both youth and adults.

Numerous studies have examined an array of afterschool programs in order to discern the key factors that contribute to program quality. Little (2008) stressed that forming healthy relationships with program staff can lead to a positive emotional climate for students, allowing them to feel comfortable learning and exploring. Factors that serve as a catalyst for establishing these bonds are a small staff-child ratio and a well-prepared and compensated staff. Professional development in both content areas and youth development contribute to staff becoming role models and informal mentors for participating young people. The best programs are structured with explicit goals and activities designed with these goals in mind. For instance, program goals might address improving a specific set of social skills, building on previous knowledge, meeting age-specific developmental needs, or maximizing engagement in school (Palmer, 2009). Previous research in afterschool and education has pointed to the importance of program staff in providing a high-quality experience for youth (Commission on Children at Risk, 2003; Pianta, 1999; Rosenthal & Vandell, 1996; Thompson & Kelly-Vance, 2001).

By examining a range of academic and non-academic outcomes, and linking these to program practices, the Massachusetts Afterschool Research Study (MARS) was designed to build understanding of the complex relationships between program goals, program practices, and outcomes for youth. The study focuses on 4,108 children in 78 afterschool programs distributed across the state of Massachusetts (Huang & Gibbons, 2000; Marshall & Coll, 1997; Miller, 2003; Posner & Vandell, 1994).

MARS has two major goals: (1) to identify those program characteristics that are most closely related to high quality implementation, and (2) to explore the links between program quality and youth outcomes. MARS focuses on afterschool programs serving elementary and

middle school youth from ten different communities across the state, including urban, suburban, and rural areas, with an emphasis on communities that include lower income children who are the most likely to benefit from program participation (Huang & Gibbons, 2000; Marshall & Coll, 1997; Miller, 2003; Posner & Vandell, 1994).

A number of staff characteristics with MARS had significant relationships with program quality. Programs with more highly educated staff, both at the program director and direct service levels, were rated significantly higher on program quality, including staff engagement, youth engagement, activities, and homework time. Programs that utilized certified teachers and other school staff tended to rate higher on these quality indicators. In addition to background characteristics, the working conditions of the staff were associated with higher or lower quality in a variety of areas. Higher wages are linked with higher quality in all areas except communication with families and more training is related to higher quality staff engagement. Higher staff turnover (more staff leaving during the school year) is associated with lower quality ratings in both youth engagement and homework time (Palmer, 2009).

Overview field studies were conducted between 2008 and 2010 at the Bridge Project, an afterschool program located in four public housing communities in Denver, Colorado. The Bridge Project has been providing services to low-income youth in housing developments for 17 years; the project's connection with the University of Denver allows significant opportunity for research and evaluation. Intervention elements include tutoring, mentoring, and academic, personal, and social skill-building groups. Volunteer tutors receive structured training to introduce them to the organization, roles, responsibilities, and tutoring techniques. Tutors also receive ongoing support from educators and other support staff. Social and behavioral skill

training groups are provided to address topics such as being successful in school, substance use, bullying, and aggression.

Often, afterschool programs incorporate creativity into their method of teaching academics. Students are encouraged to learn, but the focus is not on passing standardized tests, but rather is placed on making learning a positive experience that builds students' confidence in their ability to achieve academically, thus improving their academic achievement (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). Intentional alignment with school instruction allows struggling students to catch up to their classmates, while helping all students hone the skills necessary for success in school (Beckett, 2009). Learning the same content through different and innovative approaches that only afterschool can offer is extraordinarily helpful in content understanding and retention for students. The afterschool space represents an unparalleled opportunity for students to grow not just academically, but holistically as well (Palmer, 2009). Quality programs that feature enriching, creative endeavors such as art, music, or physical activity present students with options to explore. This "whole child" approach also allows for autonomy in program choice since students are more likely to participate in activities in which they are interested (Palmer, 2009).

Partnerships with community organizations allow programs to leverage otherwise unattainable resources (Little, 2008). Effective partnerships also provide youth with multiple constructive environments, thus reinforcing healthy attitudes and behavior more consistently. Similarly, family involvement also promotes continued participation and engagement (Palmer, 2009). For a program to work, it is necessary to have enough space, supervision and psychological and physical security (Beckett, 2009). With the comfort and freedom these factors

provide, students can focus on the task at hand. In addition to physical safety, the best programs provide opportunities for exercise and access to nutritious meals and snacks that otherwise might be unavailable. Studies have shown that improving a student's physical well-being can build higher self-esteem, leading students to participate with greater frequency and confidence (Little, 2008).

Saddler (2008) stressed that one of the greatest challenges facing teachers is accommodating struggling, diverse, and at-risk readers. Even with the use of effective, research-based techniques, many children fail to make adequate progress in reading and may need additional assistance. One way to provide this assistance is through tutoring (Saddler, 2008). A popular method of identifying students in need of additional academic support, in lieu of special education, is Response to Intervention (Case, 2012). Tiers I and II interventions could be carried out in after school programs, providing additional support for students beyond the school day.

Case (2010) stressed a critical component of Response to Intervention is early identification of children with academic problems. Early identification within RTI requires short-term interventions to discriminate between children who need supplemental instruction to catch up with their peers from those who require more intensive instruction. In Case's investigation, there were no significant effects for the norm-referenced measures of early reading. Similar to the reviewed studies, the largest effects were found for skills that were taught as part of the intervention. Langer (2001), she stressed that in high literacy students have the ability to use language, content, and reasoning and in ways that are appropriate for particular situations and disciplines. In order to have adequate literacy skills, students must have basic reading and writing skills, along with the ability to use language, content and social

appropriateness together. Hartry, Fitzgerald, and Porter (2008) presented results from their implementation study of a structured reading program for fourth, fifth, and sixth graders in an afterschool setting. This study stressed that schools and districts often view an extended school day as a promising way to address the literacy needs of their lowest-performing students by devoting more time to reading instruction. Hull (2001) stressed that it is important to find special literacy skills for teachers and researchers to learn about and participate in communities to help improve student literacy and learning on a daily basis. Focusing on program implementation in one district as part of a randomized controlled trial, the authors found that successfully implementing a structured reading program in an afterschool setting depends on thoughtful preparation, suitable resources, and ongoing attention (Reis, McCoach, Little, Muller, & Kanishan, 2011).

Williams and Johnson (2011) presented multiple factors that are involved in developing a useful emotional climate in the classroom. Many of the teachers in the Williams and Johnson study were consistent in their teacher beliefs, the teacher selves they wanted to portray, and approaches they used when emotional events occurred within their classrooms or with a particular student. In the study conclusion, they reminded us that different subjects tend to elicit different types and levels of emotional experiences for both teachers and students (Williams & Johnson, 2011). Teachers within specific subject areas should be educated on how to handle emotions that are commonly felt within their domain (Topping, 2003).

Some of the focus in schools has been on superficial aspects of the problem or trying to fix the child who is at risk rather than focusing on the underlying cause of the problem, which may mean changing the environment. One author suggested having a base knowledge of the

youth's school experiences and the characteristics of the school they attend because those things may influence the course of his or her school career (Roderick, 1993). Language plays a large part in how we interact in our environment and in our interpersonal relationships with others. Responding to the needs of a child requires working to understand that child. This may require changing one's perception of the meaning of at risk. The time has come to remove the blinders and not look at at-risk youth through narrow lenses. It is this negative view toward at-risk youth that contributes and preserves at-risk behaviors. Instead, look to empower at-risk youth by helping them to believe in themselves by believing in them (Roderick, 1993).

21st Century Community Learning Centers Afterschool Programs

Findings from the national evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program, which is the largest afterschool program in the United States, show that, on average, students participating in the programs had no improvement in academic achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). In addition, an evaluation found that 21st CCLC programs were not consistently focused on academics and often placed more emphasis on sports or extracurricular activities because they thought those activities were more popular with students and would encourage participation in the program (Burdumy, Dynarski, & Deke, 2007).

Students in 21st CCLC programs may not have been spending enough time engaged in academic content to produce measurable gains in achievement. Simply adding time to students' days may not benefit them academically; that time may need to be carefully orchestrated to facilitate learning and retention of academic material. Additionally, the average amount of total instructional time received by students in a typical afterschool program may be too low to generate meaningful academic effects (Kane, 2004).

Afterschool Instructional Strategies

The findings from the evaluation of Enhanced Academic Instruction in Afterschool Programs, sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), provide some evidence for what works in afterschool instruction (Black, 2008). The elementary school programs delivered school-day math and reading curricula adapted to afterschool settings. Students who received an average of 57 hours of enhanced math instruction, more than the 30–40 hours Supplemental Educational Services (SES) students might receive, had modest but statistically significant improvements in math achievement after one year compared with students in a regular after-school program (Black, 2008). No differences were found between students who received enhanced reading instruction and those in a regular after-school program. This first year of findings provides some indication that instruction in Out of School Time can improve student achievement when delivered in a structured, focused format with adequate dosage.

Quality afterschool programs can boost the overall well-being of children and youth: developing them into lifelong learners, helping them become more self-confident and improving their performance in and attitude toward school. In his 2010 evaluation of afterschool programs, Shernoff stated:

> Because the effects of afterschool program participation on quality of experience, social competence, and academic performance were generally positive and suggest the importance of program quality, this study supports recommendations for increasing the opportunities of youth to participate in high-quality programs offering such activities.

Athletes Committed to Educating Students (ACES) in Minneapolis, Minnesota is focused on reducing the achievement gap by providing innovative literacy enrichment to its participants.

Data show the program's significant effects on reading gains (Afterschool Alliance, 2011). For example, during the 2009-2010 school year, ACES students were 30% more likely than non-participants to gain one year or more of reading growth. In addition, ACES has served the Minneapolis community for 16 years, creating ongoing access and sustained participation opportunities. ACES program curriculum has strong ties to school-day learning. Students learn in classrooms of 10 or fewer, with a 1:4 staff-to-student ratio, providing individualized instruction in partnership with school day teachers and principals to truly coordinate the school day and afterschool. This creates a strong community of learning for the students which assists in their literacy development. Throughout their work, ACES connects with families, teachers, administrators and other community groups to create holistic support for students' literacy development. ACES students have achieved outstanding gains in reading because of dedicated staff and a whole child approach that allows children to change their mentality on literacy and succeed in school (Afterschool Alliance, 2011).

Nearly all the best afterschool programs encourage enhanced literacy by helping children to see how and why reading and writing might be useful and relevant to their lives and futures. In this, reading and writing transcend their status as schoolwork and instead become an avenue for self-discovery and community exploration (Afterschool Alliance, 2011).

As different as afterschool programs may look from one another, the quality of an afterschool program is fundamental to make certain that they are using their full capabilities to have a positive impact on their students and support their students' success. A substantial body of evidence exists documenting the breadth of positive outcomes for children and youth participating in quality afterschool programs - from gains in test scores to improved behavior to

higher levels of self-confidence. As more research emerges demonstrating the benefits of afterschool programs, research questions in the afterschool field have shifted from if afterschool programs impact youth to why afterschool programs impact youth (Granger, 2010).

Chapter III: Methodology

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of afterschool programming for K-8th grade targeted service students.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

Additionally, the purpose of this study was to articulate the optimal environment for effective programming for consideration when using theory in afterschool programs quantitative research.

Constructivism and sociocultural theory comprised the understanding of how afterschool programs can provide an optimal environment for effective programming and interventions to engage learners on a daily basis. Constructivism theory is based on observation and how people learn. It is about a student constructing their own learning and knowledge of the world and reflecting on their own experiences. Sociocultural theory happens through social interactions. Students and teachers form relationships to help the student learn. In order to be effective, afterschool programs must challenge students and develop skills, either missed in prior years of learning or from ineffective teaching. Constructivism and sociocultural theory are used as the theoretical foundation for this study aiding in the understanding of how afterschool programs can provide an optimal environment for improving effective programming and interventions. It is important to review the attributes of effective afterschool programs and determine how these elements can be translated and incorporated at the school level.

Research Design

The move toward academic accountability and the search for a means to improve academic achievement has resulted in an increase in afterschool programs extending the school day to enhance academic performance (Beckett, 2001; Gayl, 2004; Hollister, 2003). The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the essential components and interventions used in afterschool programming with K-8th grade students. The first section of this review focused on the effectiveness of afterschool programming. The second section examined the effectiveness of interventions for students who participate in afterschool programming. This study used quantitative methods and gathered data via a survey instrument. Results from the study are used to understand what afterschool coordinators feel are important to the work of effective afterschool programming in Minnesota and to make recommendations to afterschool programs to help future after program coordinators develop the skills and knowledge they will need to succeed in their roles.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

RQ1: Based on afterschool directors' perceptions, what components determine the effectiveness of after-school programming for K-8th grade targeted service students?

RQ2: Based on afterschool directors' perceptions, which of those RQ1 components rank most highly in order of importance?

RQ3: Based on afterschool directors' perceptions, what components determine the effectiveness of interventions for students who participate in afterschool programming for K-8th grade targeted service students?

RQ4: Based on afterschool directors' perceptions, which of those RQ3 components rank most highly in order of importance?

Hypothesis

$H1_0$ - Based on afterschool directors' perceptions, there are no components that determine the effectiveness of after-school programming for K-8th grade targeted service students.

$H1_A$ - Based on afterschool directors' perceptions, there are components that determine the effectiveness of after-school programming for K-8th grade targeted service students.

$H2_0$ - Based on afterschool directors' perceptions, there are no components that rank as most important for after-school programming.

$H2_A$ - Based on afterschool directors' perceptions, there are components that rank as most important for after-school programming.

$H3_0$ - Based on afterschool directors' perceptions, there are no components that determine the effectiveness of interventions of after-school programming for K-8th grade targeted service students.

$H3_A$ - Based on afterschool directors' perceptions, there are components that determine the effectiveness of interventions of after-school programming for the K-8th grade targeted service students.

$H4_0$ - Based on afterschool directors' perceptions, there are no components that rank as most important interventions in after-school programming.

$H4_A$ - Based on afterschool directors' perceptions, there are components that rank as most important interventions in after-school programming.

Instrument and Measures

The first part of the survey questions looked at which components determine the effectiveness of afterschool programming for K-8 grade targeted service students. The second part explored which components determine the effectiveness of interventions for K-8 grade targeted service students. All survey questions were created by the author.

Sample

There are approximately 220 Area Learning Centers/Education Cooperative Directors that have Targeted Services programming throughout the state of Minnesota. All 220 were invited to participate in this survey. This group did not include afterschool school programming that is not affiliated with Targeted Services programming. In order to achieve acceptable levels of confidence and margin of error, 140 completed surveys were sought.

Setting

The diverse statewide sample size depended on the willingness of afterschool coordinators to complete the survey.

In order to be eligible for the study, programs needed to meet the following criteria:

- Only area learning centers qualify to provide targeted services afterschool programming.
- The elementary and middle-level learners served must qualify under Graduation
- Program participants must be at least 5 years of age and have an intake form documenting how they qualify for services according to the Minnesota Statutes, section 123A.06, Subdivision 2, and Minnesota Statutes section 124D.68, Subdivision 2.

Data Collection Procedures

The Bethel survey tool, Qualtrics, was used for all survey questions. Participants had three weeks to respond to the survey and a reminder was sent out after the first and second weeks. The survey questions were sent to all area learning centers/education cooperatives that have targeted services programming through the state of Minnesota that can service K-8 students in afterschool programming. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Alternative Education site provided the email addresses for each Targeted Services Director. To assure everyone received the opportunity to participate a link was sent with the assistance of the Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs (MAAP) president to all Targeted Services Directors in Minnesota.

Data Analysis

The Bethel survey tool, Qualtrics, produced both tables and descriptive statistics, as well as a SPSS file that was imported in analysis tools. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) is the data tool that was used to analyze data. Answers to questions on the survey will be completely confidential and anonymous. Data is analyzed and only shared in aggregate format. All data has been kept in a secure location on a secure password computer and secure cloud location. Respondents' name, and the names of their school have been removed and never connected to answers in any way. The researcher and a hired analysis professional are the only individuals who had access to the data. The p-value used was greater than or equal to .05 for the threshold of significance. The statistical test, a T-test, was used in the analysis.

Reliability, Validity, and Trustworthiness

The survey was sent to four participants not involved in the research study. Committee members served as a peer review team, ensuring the quality and validity of the study. Face and content validity was tested via the field test with a few participants. Pilot testing provided feedback on construct validity as does the alignment process completed between the RQs and the survey questions.

Limitation and Assumptions:

Several limitations have been identified as potential barriers to this study. The first limitation is sample size. Because the study was limited to Minnesota, the sample size was relatively small compared to the number of afterschool directors in the other 49 states. A second limitation was a lack of directors' knowledge about students' afterschool backgrounds. A third limitation was the amount of academic information that each individual afterschool program collects on its participants.

Ethical Considerations

Researchers have a responsibility to ensure quality and integrity of the research being completed. One will seek informed consent as well as respecting the confidentiality and anonymity of the participates. Furthermore, participants were able to participate in the study voluntarily and the study does avoid harm. In all of the data collection, field notes, and transcripts, there were no personal identifiers. All of the data has been locked up and password protected. None of the data have been shared with anyone who was not part of the study team. It is hoped that both the researcher and the participants would benefit from the research. It was important for the researcher not to overpower the participant, so they were not coerced into

participation in the project/study. During the study it was important to remember that when quantitative data is being analyzed and interpreted, issues arise that call for good ethical decisions.

Chapter IV: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of afterschool programming for K-8th grade targeted service students. The study also examined the effectiveness of afterschool interventions. Data were collected using the Qualtrics survey platform and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for statistical analysis with support from Dr. Joel Fredrickson of Bethel University.

This chapter is organized around demographic data and statistical analysis of the hypothesis related to the four research questions: (RQ1) Based on afterschool director perceptions, what components determine the effectiveness of afterschool programming for K-8th grade targeted service students? (RQ2) Based on afterschool director perceptions, which of those RQ1 components rank most highly in order of importance? (RQ3) Based on afterschool director perceptions, what components determine the effectiveness of interventions for students who participate in afterschool programming for K-8th grade targeted service students? (RQ4) Based on afterschool director perceptions, which of those RQ3 components rank most highly in order of importance?

Data were collected from Area Learning Center/Education Cooperative Directors that have Targeted Services programming throughout the state of Minnesota. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Alternative Education site provided the email addresses for each Targeted Services Director. On October 4, 2020, an initial email was sent through Qualtrics to a total of 186 Targeted Services Director email addresses seeking participation in the study. In order for survey to reach approximately 220 Area Learning Center/Education Cooperative

Directors the survey was disseminated via a link from Qualtrics. To ensure everyone received the opportunity to participate, a link was sent with the assistance of the Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs (MAAP) president to all Targeted Services Directors in Minnesota. A week after the initial email, a reminder email was sent. A week later, a reminder was sent out via Qualtrics and the MAAP president sent out a last call email to the population surveyed. A week after that the survey was closed.

One of the concerns with the survey was the limited population available. The scope of the population was targeted services directors across the state of Minnesota. There are approximately 220 targeted services directors that serve approximately 259 registered programs around the state of Minnesota. This small population size was a concern prior to the study. To achieve a confidence level of 95% with a confidence interval of +/- 5 would have required that 140 individuals responded.

The study survey resulted in a total of 67 surveys started. However, not all responses were complete. Only 53 surveys were finished and submitted via Qualtrics. This result was a 24% return for completed surveys. These 53 responses were used in the data analysis process. After submitting the survey, participants received a thank you email with the opportunity to put their name in a random drawing for one of seven gifts cards (2 - $25 at Target and 5 - $10 at Caribou). This approach helped increase response rates during the COVID pandemic.

Research Question One Findings

Research question one asked: Based on afterschool director perceptions, what components determine the effectiveness of after-school programming for K-8th grade targeted service students? The null hypothesis ($H1_o$) for research question one was: Based on afterschool

director perceptions, there are no components that determine the effectiveness of after-school programming for K-8th grade targeted service students. The alternate hypothesis ($H1_a$) was: Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are components that determine the effectiveness of after-school programming for K-8th grade targeted service students. For RQ1, respondents were able to clearly indicate the effectiveness of afterschool components. The director responses ranged (from what to what?) when responding to the six afterschool components. In order for a component to be viewed as effective, the researcher determined that 50% or more of afterschool directors had to acknowledged on the survey that a component was necessary for a program to be effective. Using that criteria, two out of the six components were found to be necessary for an afterschool program to be successful. The first component was positive staff/student relationships, with 71.7% of directors saying a program cannot be successful without it. The second was measurable & lasting learning (61.3%). See Table 2. The following four components were viewed as non-essential for an afterschool program to be successful: professional development, parent involvement, home/school connection, and small class size. RQ1's null hypothesis is rejected because afterschool directors stated that positive staff/student relationships and measurable and lasting learning were seen as essential components needed for an afterschool program to be successful (Table 1).

Table 1

Items Meeting the Criteria for Effective Afterschool Programming

Rank	Item	% responding can't be successful without:
1	Positive Staff/Student Relationships	71.7%
2	Measurable & Lasting Learning	61.3%

Table 2

Items Not Meeting the Criteria for Effective Afterschool Programming

Rank	Item	% responding can't be successful without:
1	Professional Development	34.0%
2	Parent Involvement	32.0%
3	Home/School Connection	30.4%
4	Small Class Size	22.6%

Research Question Two Findings

Research question two asked: Based on afterschool director perceptions, which of those RQ1 components rank most highly in order of importance? The null hypothesis ($H2_o$) for research question two was: Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are no components that rank as most important for after-school programming. The alternate hypothesis ($H2_a$) was: Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are components that rank as most important for after-school programming.

Afterschool directors were also asked to respond to the importance of component items on a 1 (very important) to 5 (very unimportant) scale. Afterschool directors gave the largest percentage of "very important" ratings to measurable and lasting learning (82.7%). The next most important component was having home/school connection (71.2%). The third most important component was having professional development (65.4%). See Appendix A for frequency distributions for each of these three items.

A series of paired comparisons were used to examine which components afterschool directors considered to be most important. Two components were selected most often in the paired comparisons: positive staff/student relationships and measurable and lasting learning. When the two components were pitted against one another, 62.7% of afterschool directors selected positive staff/student relationships instead of measurable and lasting learning. The paired comparisons were formed from the first 10 survey questions. The questions were then grouped into one of the paired comparison categories (see Table 4). A binomial test ($N = 51$, $k = 32$) revealed this proportional difference to be statistically significant, $p = .020$. See Table 3 for all paired comparison and Table 5 provides the rank order of important program components by afterschool directors. The data concludes that the null hypothesis is rejected because a clear ranking emerged for the afterschool director responses, with all comparisons demonstrating statistical significance.

Table 3

Binomial Test Paired Comparisons by Afterschool Directors of Important Program Components

Pairing	Paired Comparison	Frequency	Percent	p-value
1	Home/School Connection vs.	35	68.6%	.003
	Professional Development	16	31.4%	
2	Home/School Connection vs.	11	21.6%	<.001
	Measurable and Lasting Learning	40	78.4%	
3	Home/School Connection vs.	42	82.4%	<.001
	Parent Involvement	9	17.6%	
4	Positive Staff/Student Relationships vs.	41	80.4%	<.001
	Small Class Size	10	19.6%	
5	Positive Staff/Student Relationships vs.	41	80.4%	<.001
	Professional Development	10	19.6%	
6	Positive Staff/Student Relationships vs.	32	62.7%	.020
	Measurable and Lasting Learning	19	37.3%	
7	Positive Staff/Student Relationships vs.	46	90.2%	<.001
	Parent Involvement	5	9.8%	
8	Small Class Size vs.	34	66.7%	.007
	Professional Development	17	33.3%	
9	Small Class Size vs.	7	13.7%	<.001
	Measurable & Lasting Learning	44	86.3%	

10	Small Class Size vs.	37	72.5%	<.001
	Parent Involvement	14	27.5%	
11	Professional Development vs.	17	33.3%	.007
	Home/School Connection	34	66.7%	
12	Professional Development vs.	30	58.8%	.051
	Parent Involvement	21	41.2%	
13	Professional Development vs.	6	11.8%	<.001
	Measurable & Lasting Learning	45	88.2%	
14	Measurable & Lasting Learning vs.	40	78.4%	<.001
	Parent Involvement	11	21.6%	

Table 4

Survey Questions and Component Groupings

Survey Questions	Positive Relationships	Meas. Lasting Learning	Home/School	Class Size	Prof. Develop.	Parent Involvement
1. Home and school			X			
2. Needs and skills		X				
3. Not meeting goals		X				
4. Positive relationships	X					
5. Ev. Based Instruction					X	
6. Small Class Size				X		
7. Comm. Needs			X			
8. Dev. and Trainings					X	
9. Meas. Lasting Learning		X				
10. Parents Engaging						X

Table 5

Rank of Important Program Components by Afterschool Directors

Rank	Program Component	Mean Percent chosen in paired comparisons	Number of times 'won' in paired comparisons	Number of times 'lost' in paired comparisons
1	Positive Staff/Student Relationships	78.4%	4	0
2	Measurable & Lasting Learning	73.7%	5	1
3	Home/School Connection	59.8%	3	1
4	Small Class Size	43.1%	2	2
5	Professional Development	31.4%	1	5
6	Parent Involvement	23.5%	0	5

Research Question Three Findings

Research question three asked: Based on afterschool director perceptions, which interventions determine the effectiveness of aftershool programs for students who participate in afterschool programming for K-8th grade targeted services? The null hypothesis ($H3_o$) for research question three was: Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are no interventions that determine the effectiveness of after-school programming for K-8th grade targeted service students. The alternate hypothesis ($H3_a$) was: Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are interventions that determine the effectiveness of interventions of after-school programming for the K-8th grade targeted service students. In order for an intervention to be viewed as effective, 35% or more of afterschool directors viewed these interventions as essential. Using that criteria, two interventions out of five were found to be necessary for an afterschool program to be successful. Table 6 ranks the percent of directors responding that a program cannot be successful without that intervention. For RQ3, the interventions that were seen by afterschool directors as being most crucial for a successful program were: academic & developmental skills building for struggling readers (40% said a program cannot be successful without it), and academic & developmental skills building for other targeted needs (38%). RQ3's null hypothesis is rejected because afterschool directors stated under the umbrella of "Academic & Developmental Skill Building", that interventions for struggling readers and targeting student needs were seen as essential interventions for an afterschool program to be successful. See Table 6 for the remaining interventions and percentages.

Table 6

Percentage of Afterschool Directors Who Perceive That Programs Will Not be Successful if a Particular Intervention is Missing

Rank	Item	% responding not successful without this intervention
1	Academic & Developmental Skills Building for Struggling Readers	40.0%
2	Academic & Developmental Skills Building for other Targeted Needs	38.0%
3	Supplemental Instruction Specific to Individual Student Deficits	30.0%
4	Formative Assessments Designed to Increase Comprehension	28.0%
5	Formative Assessments Designed to Expand Learning Techniques	26.0%

Research Question Four Findings

Research question four asked: Based on afterschool director perceptions, which of those RQ3 interventions rank most highly in order of importance? The null hypothesis ($H4_o$) for research question four was: Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are no interventions that rank as most important in after-school programming. The alternate hypothesis ($H4_a$) was: Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are interventions that rank as most important in after-school programming. In order for an intervention to be ranked as very important, 65% or more of afterschool directors ranked the item as important or very important. In Table 7, a series of paired comparisons were used to examine which interventions afterschool directors considered to be most important. Academic and developmental skill building was seen as the most important intervention of the three options. When paired with the second most selected option, supplemental instruction, 78% of afterschool directors selected academic and developmental skill building instead. The paired comparisons were formed from survey questions number 10 through number 20. See Table 8. The questions were then grouped into one of the paired comparison categories. A binomial test ($N = 50$, $k = 39$) revealed this proportional difference in favor of academic and developmental skill building to be statistically significant, $p < .001$. Table 9 rank orders the percent of interventions not successful. For RQ4, the interventions that were seen by afterschool directors as being most crucial for a successful program were: academic and developmental skill building (83%), supplemental instruction (46%), formative assessment (21%). See Table 9 for the remaining interventions and percentages. The data concludes that the null hypothesis is rejected because a clear ranking

emerged for the afterschool director responses, with all comparisons demonstrating statistical significance.

Table 7

Binomial Test Paired Comparisons by Afterschool Directors of Important Interventions

Pairing	Paired Comparison	Frequency	Percent	p-value
1	Supplemental Instruction vs.	35	70.0%	.002
	Formative Assessments	15	30.0%	
2	Supplemental Instruction vs.	11	22.0%	<.001
	Academic and Developmental Skill Building	39	78.0%	
3	Formative Assessments vs.	6	12.0%	<.001
	Academic and Developmental Skill Building	44	88.0%	

Table 8

Intervention Survey Questions and Groupings

Question Number	Survey Questions	Ac/ Develop. Skill Building	Supp. Instruction	Form Assessments
12	Filling in the gaps		X	
13	Interventions for struggling readers	X		
14	Target needs	X		
15	Expanding skills		X	
16	Multiple learning techniques			X
17	Positive outcomes		X	
18	Increasing comprehension			X

19	Pinpointing interventions		X
20	Academic/Development skill building	X	

Table 9

Rank of Important Interventions by Afterschool Directors

Rank	Program Component	Mean Percent chosen in paired comparisons	Number of times 'won' in paired comparisons	Number of times 'lost' in paired comparisons
1	Academic and Developmental Skill Building	83.0%	2	0
2	Supplemental Instruction	46.0%	1	1
3	Formative Assessment	21.0%	0	2

Summary of Results

The chapter presented results of the study that align to the four primary research questions. Table 10 provides an overview of the four null hypothesis and corresponding outcomes based on the findings. Chapter 5 provides comprehensive implications of the findings along with recommendations for future research specific to the effectiveness of the essential components and interventions used in afterschool programming with K-8th grade students.

Table 10

Summary Hypotheses Testing Outcomes Measuring Afterschool Components and Interventions

Null Hypothesis	Outcome
$H1_0$ - Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are no components that determine the effectiveness of after-school programming for K-8th grade targeted service students.	Reject the Null Hypothesis
$H2_0$ - Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are no components that rank as most important for after-school programming.	Reject the Null Hypothesis
$H3_0$ - Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are no components that determine the effectiveness of interventions of after-school programming for K-8th grade targeted service students.	Reject the Null Hypothesis
$H4_0$ - Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are no components that rank as most important interventions in after-school programming.	Reject the Null Hypothesis

Chapter V: Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

This chapter presents a summary of this research study and conclusions from data presented in Chapter Four. The discussion of the findings provides implications for action, recommendations for further research, and concluding remarks. Targeted services is state funded, by invitation only program that offers additional learning opportunities to academically targeted K-8 students. Students are invited into the program if they would benefit from the program and are able to be independent, safe, and successful within the program. Targeted services programs are purposefully designed to build academic skills, as well as to help students develop better organizational and social/emotional skills. Targeted services programs are taught by Minnesota licensed teachers. Students qualify based upon informal and formal district assessment measures as well as district reading and math benchmarks. Students are selected for participation because they have demonstrated academic performance below grade-level expectations, are at risk for failing to meet the state's academic content standards or have social challenges that may put them at risk of not being successful in school. The identification of students who could benefit from a targeted service program can occur through referral by classroom teachers, support teachers, counselors, or other school personnel. Every student enrolled in a targeted services program must have a continuous learning plan (CLP). The CLP is required by the Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.128, Subdivision 3. It is a communication tool to show why the student was recommended and to involve/inform the parents about the process. A parent/guardian must sign the registration form for the extended day/year program, as well as their child's CLP.

Research Questions

RQ1: Based on afterschool director perceptions, what components determine the effectiveness of after-school programming for K-8th grade targeted service students?

RQ2: Based on afterschool director perceptions, which of those RQ1 components rank most highly in order of importance?

RQ3: Based on afterschool director perceptions, what components determine the effectiveness of interventions for students who participate in afterschool programming for K-8th grade targeted service students?

RQ4: Based on afterschool director perceptions, which of those RQ3 components rank most highly in order of importance?

The information in Table 10 summarizes the outcome for each null hypothesis based on afterschool director perceptions.

Table 11

Summary Hypotheses Testing Outcomes Measuring Afterschool Components and Interventions

Null Hypothesis	Outcome
$H1_0$ - Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are no components that determine the effectiveness of after-school programming for K-8th grade targeted service students.	Reject the Null Hypothesis
$H2_0$ - Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are no components that rank as most important for after-school programming.	Reject the Null Hypothesis
$H3_0$ - Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are no components that determine the effectiveness of interventions of after-school programming for K-8th grade targeted service students.	Reject the Null Hypothesis
$H4_0$ - Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are no components that rank as most important interventions in after-school programming.	Reject the Null Hypothesis

Summary of Findings

The findings for RQ1 are addressed in this section.

RQ1: Based on afterschool director perceptions, what components determine the effectiveness of after-school programming for K-8th grade targeted service students? The null hypothesis ($H1_o$) for research question one was: Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are no components that determine the effectiveness of after-school programming for K-8th grade targeted service students.

The percentage of afterschool directors who perceive that programs will not be successful if a component is missing (Table 1) determined the following outcomes when analyzing the difference of director perceptions.

- Positive staff/student relationships with students: 71.7% of directors said a program cannot be as successful without it.
- Measurable & lasting learning: 61.3% of directors said a program cannot be as successful without meeting intended goals and meeting the various needs and skills of students.
- Professional Development: 34% of directors said a program cannot be successful without evidence-based instruction and teacher development trainings.
- Parent Involvement: 32% of directors said a program cannot be as successful without parent engagement.
- Home/school connection: 30.4% of directors said a program cannot be as successful without this team approach link.
- Small class size (0-12 students), 22.6 % of directors responded that a program cannot be as successful without small class size in afterschool programming.

There is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis aligned to RQ1. The researcher established criteria that 50% or more of the directors would need to indicate that a component was necessary for an afterschool program to be successful. Two components met this criteria (positive staff/student relationships and measurable and lasting learning) and four did not (professional development, parent involvement, home/school connection, and small class size). Since respondents were able to identify a list of components that were necessary for a program to be successful, the null hypothesis is rejected.

RQ2: Based on afterschool director perceptions, which of those RQ1 components rank most highly in order of importance? The null hypothesis ($H2_o$) for research question two was: Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are no components that rank as most important for after-school programming. The alternate hypothesis ($H2_a$) was: Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are components that rank as most important for after-school programming. A series of paired comparisons were used to examine which components afterschool directors considered to be most important. The binomial test paired comparisons (Table 2) determined the following outcome when analyzing the afterschool directors of important program components:

- Home/school connection received a rating of 68.6 % when compared to professional development at 31.4 %. The p-value was .003.
- Measurable & lasting learning received a rating of 78.4% when compared to home/school connection, 21.6 %. The p-value was <.001.
- Home/school connection received a rating of 82.4 % when compared to parent involvement, 17.6%. The p-value was <.001.

- Positive staff/student relationship received a rating of 80.4% when compared to small class size, 19.6 %. The p-value was <.001.
- Positive staff/student relationship received a rating of 80.4% when compared to professional development, 19.6 %. The p-value was <.001.
- Positive staff/student relationship received a rating of 62.7% when compared to measurable & lasing learning, 9.8%. The p-value was .02.
- Positive staff/student relationships received a rating of 90.2% when compared to parent involvement, 19.6 %. The p value was <.001.
- Small class size received a rating of 66.7% when compared to professional development, 33.3 %. The p-value was .007.
- Measurable & lasting learning received a rating of 86.3 % when compared to small class size, 13.7%. The p-value was <.001.
- Small class size received a rating of 72.5% when compared to parent involvement, 27.5 %. The p-value was <.001.
- Home/school connection received a rating of 66.7% when compared to professional development, 33.3%. The p-value was .007.
- Professional development received a rating of 58.8 % when compared to parent involvement, 41.2%. The p-value was .051.
- Measurable & lasting learning received a rating of 88.2% when compared to professional development, 11.8 %. The p-value was <.001.
- Measurable & lasting learning received a rating of 78.4 % when compared to parent involvement, 21.6%. The p-value was <.001.

The rank analysis of important program components by afterschool directors (Table 5) determined the following rank order when analyzing the afterschool directors of important program components:

Table 12

Rank Analysis Summary of Important Program Components

Rank	Program Component	Mean Percent
1	Positive Staff/Student Relationships	78.4%
2	Measurable & Lasting Learning	73.7%
3	Home/School Connection	59.8%
4	Small Class Size	43.1%
5	Professional Development	31.37%
6	Parent Involvement	23.54%

There was sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis aligned to RQ2. Two components were selected most often in the paired comparisons: positive staff/student relationships and measurable and lasting learning (Table 12). When the two components were pitted against one another, 62.7% of afterschool directors selected positive staff/student relationships instead of measurable and lasting learning. A binomial test ($N = 51$, $k = 32$) revealed this proportional difference to be statistically significant, $p = .020$. See Table 2 for all paired comparisons. The data concludes that the null hypothesis is rejected because a clear ranking emerged for the afterschool director responses, with all comparisons demonstrating statistical significance.

RQ3: Based on afterschool director perceptions, what components determine the effectiveness of interventions for students who participate in afterschool programming for K-8th grade targeted service students? The null hypothesis ($H3_o$) for research question three was: Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are no interventions that determine the effectiveness of after-school programming for K-8th grade targeted service students. The alternate hypothesis ($H3_a$) was: Based on afterschool director perceptions, there are interventions that determine the effectiveness of interventions of after-school programming for the K-8th grade targeted service students.

For RQ3 the interventions that were seen by afterschool directors as being most crucial for a successful program included: interventions for struggling readers (40% said a program cannot be successful without them), and interventions to target the student's individual needs (received a rating of 38% responding that afterschool programming could not be successful without them). RQ3's null hypothesis was rejected because afterschool directors stated under the

umbrella of “Academic & Developmental Skill Building”, that interventions for struggling readers and targeting student needs were seen as essential interventions for an afterschool program to be successful. See Table 13 for the remaining interventions and percentages.

Table 13

Percentage of Afterschool Directors Who Perceive That Programs Will Not be Successful if an Intervention is Missing

Rank	Item	% responding not successful
1	Academic & Development Skills Building for Struggling Readers	40.0%
2	Academic & Development Skills Building for other Targeted Needs	38.0%
3	Supplemental Instruction Specific to Individual Student Deficits	30.0%
4	Formative Assessments Designed to Increase Comprehension	28.0%
5	Formative Assessments Designed to Expand Learning Techniques	26.0%

RQ4: Based on afterschool director perceptions, which of those RQ3 components rank most highly in order of importance? The null hypothesis ($H4_o$) for research question four was: based on afterschool director perceptions, there are no interventions that rank as most important in after-school programming. The alternate hypothesis ($H4_a$) was: based on afterschool director perceptions, there are interventions that rank as most important in after-school programming.

Afterschool directors were asked to respond to the importance of seven intervention items on 1 (very important) to 5 (very important) scale (Table 9) determined the following outcomes when analyzing the data. Table 13 identifies the top five interventions needed in order for an afterschool program to be successful. The five interventions were further combined into three basic intervention approaches: supplemental instruction, academic and developmental skill building and formative assessments.

- Supplemental instruction received a rating of 70% when compared to formative assessments, at 30%. The p-value was .002.

- Academic and developmental skill building received a rating of 78% when compared to supplemental instruction, at 22%. The p-value was <.001.
- Academic and developmental skill building received a rating of 88% when compared to formative assessment, at 12%. The p-value was <.001.

Table 14

Rank of Important Interventions by Afterschool Directors

Rank	Program Component	Mean Percent chosen in paired comparisons	Number of times 'won' in paired comparisons	Number of times 'lost' in paired comparisons
1	Academic and Developmental Skill Building	83.0%	2	0
2	Supplemental Instruction	46.0%	1	1
3	Formative Assessment	21.0%	0	2

See Table 10 for the remaining interventions and percentages.

There was sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis aligned to RQ 4. A series of paired comparisons were used to examine which interventions afterschool directors considered to be most important. Academic and developmental skill building was seen as the most important intervention of the three options. When paired with the second most selected option, supplemental instruction, 78% of afterschool directors selected academic and developmental skill building instead. A binomial test (N = 50, k = 39) revealed this proportional difference in favor of academic and developmental skill building to be statistically significant, $p < .001$. See Table 14 for all paired comparisons. When tallying the "first place" votes in the paired comparisons data showed that academic and skill building received 83 first choice votes,

supplemental instruction received 46 first choice votes, and formative assessments received 21 first choice votes. The data concludes that the null hypothesis is rejected because a clear ranking emerged for the afterschool director responses, with all comparisons demonstrating statistical significance.

Recommendations for Practitioners

The results of this study have identified areas of essential components and effective interventions for K-8th grade targeted services students. The following are recommendations for practitioners to consider, based on the findings from this study.

COVID-19 Implications. Afterschool directors and targeted services programs will likely continue to see the effects of the global pandemic. Budget implications will continue to be tight. Will programs see an increase in the number of students who receive targeted services? If the survey was completed prior to COVID-19 or after COVID-19 would the data show differently for the home/school connection? It is recommended that even though budgets will be restricted, that targeted service programs monitor post-COVID program trends to see if the findings of this study remain applicable to new conditions.

Essential Components – Positive Staff/Student Relationships. Targeted services programs need to continue to foster positive staff/student relationships. It is recommended for the program to consider a mentoring program where the same teachers would follow the same group of students through a period of time. Another recommendation could be having former targeted services students serve as mentors for the current students.

Essential Components – Measurable & Lasting Learning. Afterschool directors stated that targeted services programs cannot be successful without measurable and lasting learning. It is recommended when targeted services students are in Grades 6-8 that the program begins talking about the importance of high school and education. After high school, will students attend a post-secondary school, join the military, or start in a career field? It is

important to continue to integrate the love of, and perseverance of learning into targeted services by finding innovative approaches such as project-based learning.

Reading Interventions. Afterschool directors would benefit from implementing a prescribed reading program as part of targeted services interventions. Afterschool targeted service programs could consider the inclusion of interventions by intermixing grades based on individual student needs.

Interventions. Targeted services programs could be organized to prioritize student needs. Students would be able to receive academic and developmental skill building and supplemental instruction based on need and not grade level. Afterschool directors could use formative assessments as a tool to group students based on their current academic levels.

Budget Implications for Small Class Size. Afterschool directors would benefit from using funds allocated for small class size to provide more professional development for teachers, instead. However, with targeted services programs just starting to re-open, directors may have to ensure small class size is maintained due to social distancing requirements.

Budget Implications for Professional Development. Due to COVID, targeted services programs might be able to work with a smaller budget due to professional development being held remotely. Presenters have used Zoom calls, Google Meet, and other innovate ways to present their materials without costing a program travel and meal expenses.

Afterschool directors should seek to develop and further understand the components and interventions needed to have an effective program alongside the teachers. In addition, afterschool directors may need to work with teachers and families regarding the constantly changing impact of COVID-19.

Recommendations for Further Research

As the research was coming together a few areas peaked my interest. Why were home/school connection and small class size viewed as non-essential components when compared to positive staff/student relationships and measurable & lasting learning? Why did afterschool directors view reading as the highest intervention needed at only 40%? When assessing students, why did afterschool directors only rank 28% as being crucial for a successful targeted services programs? As directors look at ways to improve targeted service programs, do they need to look at other areas of assessment as well as cost savings with small class sizes. Results from this study indicate a need for further research in the areas of essential components and the effectiveness of afterschool programming interventions.

Priority Ranking. It is recommended to complete a more in-depth study on the priority ranking of the effectiveness of afterschool programming components. This study clearly indicated a priority ranking of the effectiveness of K-8 targeted services afterschool components. If including other afterschool, out-of-school time, or other states, would a priority ranking look similar or different?

Providing Measurable and Lasting Learning and Relationships. Investigate how providing measurable and lasting learning is accomplished. Research the correlation between measurable and lasting learning and the importance of positive student and staff relationships. This study revealed K-8 targeted service directors gave the largest percentage of very important ratings to "providing measurable and lasting learning for students." But, it is unclear how that learning would be measured, or how to determine if the learning "will last".

Effectiveness of Interventions. An interesting study would be to examine the number of students in K-8 afterschool programs who had additional academic interventions prior to being enrolled in afterschool programming and how other intervention models impacted their overall progression.

Academic and Developmental Skill Building. It is recommended to review how other states implement the improvement of a student's academic skill building traits. It would be interesting for other states to determine which was more important – supplemental instruction or academic and development skill building, or if other states would find formative assessment more important.

Conduct Another Similar Study. It is recommended that this study be replicated within other states. The concern with this study was its limited scope and size. It is possible that a similar study might reveal different results. Performing this study in other states could also identify different results, or reinforce these findings.

Cautions

The data in this study was limited in size and scope. The study had potential bias and drawbacks. The population only included targeted services directors in the state of Minnesota. Some of the results and analysis may not apply in other regions. For example, an afterschool program or out-of-school-time program not affiliated with targeted services might experience different results.

This study focused on targeted service directors. Involving other afterschool staff or administrators might produce different results. Other afterschool programs might not focus on

the same essential components and interventions. Readers and future researchers should keep this in mind and perhaps compare the limited body of knowledge with their own experiences.

Another drawback was the lack of knowledge and understanding of targeted services. For example, if an afterschool director only worked with high school students, their knowledge of components and interventions may be different from someone who worked with kindergarten staff. The same could be said for afterschool program staff. If a teacher has experience teaching 5th grade, he/she may struggle with understanding the necessary interventions for a student in first grade who struggles in reading.

The COVID pandemic impacted this study in a variety of ways. The study was conducted via an emailed Qualtrics Survey. There was a concern over participation rates, since the study was conducted during a global pandemic. During stressful times, it is easy to ignore or delete an online survey invitation. Some targeted services directors declined to complete the survey due to no targeted services programming occurring during the global pandemic. Therefore, the results could contain bias and other issues due to the lower participation rate.

Also of concern was the intentional sampling of Minnesota targeted service directors. Each state has its own organizational structure for their afterschool programming. In Minnesota, the K-8 targeted services afterschool programming is a separate state funded entity, a "by invitation only" program that offers additional learning opportunities to academically targeted K-8 students. This structure may affect the study in a different manner than a state where the afterschool programming is combined with other organizations. This study's sample structure may mean that the results and analysis do not apply to other populations.

Concluding Comments

As schools in Minnesota fail to meet goals, the demand for supplemental education services, such as tutoring, summer school, or, most often, instruction after the end of the regular school day, is skyrocketing (Peterson, 2005). Considering the need for effective afterschool programming for K-8th grade targeted service students, this study examined the components and interventions needed to make an afterschool program successful.

This study employed a cross-sectional quantitative design to research the effectiveness of components commonly used in afterschool programming. Afterschool directors determined a program cannot be successful without fostering positive teacher/student relationships and identifying the various needs of the students. Afterschool directors reported afterschool programming could be successful without evidence-based instruction and small class sizes. Would K-8th grade targeted services programming see better results by applying funding towards professional development rather than small class sizes? The data in this study shows that afterschool directors do not rank class size as an essential component for success.

Afterschool director perceptions indicated that a home/school connection was more important than professional development. Furthermore, a home/school connection was more important than parent involvement. As more research has emerged, demonstrating the benefits of afterschool programs, research questions in the afterschool field have shifted from the impact of afterschool programs on youth to "why" afterschool programs impact youth (Granger, 2010).

Afterschool directors ranked the most crucial component for a successful program as academic and developmental skill building for struggling readers. The ranking also showed

afterschool programming could not be successful without interventions which target the student's other individual needs.

Afterschool programs can create a community of support that encourages reading and writing in school, at home and in social settings, offering children the opportunity to strengthen themselves as readers, writers and communicators (Halpern & Spielberger, 2002). It is hoped that the findings of this study will move more afterschool programs closer to that reality by continuing to look at essential and innovative components and interventions.

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Appendix A

Survey Question Data

3 QID1 1. How successful can afterschool programs be if they do not link home and school?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Very Successful	2	3.8	3.8	3.8
	2 Successful	4	7.5	7.5	11.3
	3 Marginally Successful	28	52.8	52.8	64.2
	4 Not Successful	19	35.8	35.8	100.0
	Total	53	100.0	100.0	

1 QID2 2. How successful can afterschool program activities be by not meeting the various needs and skills of youth?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Very Successful	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
	3 Marginally Successful	15	28.3	28.3	30.2
	4 Not Successful	37	69.8	69.8	100.0
	Total	53	100.0	100.0	

2 QID7 3. How successful can afterschool program activities be while not meeting the intended program goals?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Very Successful	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
	2 Successful	3	5.7	5.7	7.5
	3 Marginally Successful	21	39.6	39.6	47.2
	4 Not Successful	28	52.8	52.8	100.0
	Total	53	100.0	100.0	

1 QID29 4. How successful can afterschool programs be if the staff does not foster positive relationships with students?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Very Successful	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
	3 Marginally Successful	14	26.4	26.4	28.3
	4 Not Successful	38	71.7	71.7	100.0
	Total	53	100.0	100.0	

QID9 5. If teachers fail to use evidence-based instruction, how successful is the afterschool program?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Very Successful	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
	2 Successful	4	7.5	7.5	9.4
	3 Marginally Successful	30	56.6	56.6	66.0
	4 Not Successful	18	34.0	34.0	100.0
	Total	53	100.0	100.0	

QID10 6. How successful can afterschool programs be if they do not implement a small class size (0-12 students)?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Very Successful	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
	2 Successful	7	13.2	13.5	15.4
	3 Marginally Successful	32	60.4	61.5	76.9
	4 Not Successful	12	22.6	23.1	100.0
	Total	52	98.1	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.9		
Total		53	100.0		

QID11 7. How successful are afterschool programs when teachers fail to tailor their programming to the needs of the community?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Very Successful	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
	2 Successful	6	11.3	11.5	13.5
	3 Marginally Successful	32	60.4	61.5	75.0
	4 Not Successful	13	24.5	25.0	100.0
	Total	52	98.1	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.9		
Total		53	100.0		

How important is it for staff/teachers to have well-designed and clearly communicated teacher development trainings?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Very Important	34	64.2	65.4	65.4
	2 Somewhat Important	14	26.4	26.9	92.3
	3 Neutral	3	5.7	5.8	98.1
	4 Somewhat Unimportant	1	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	52	98.1	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.9		
Total		53	100.0		

How important is it for staff/teachers to provide measurable and lasting learning for students?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Very important	43	81.1	82.7	82.7
	2 Somewhat Important	7	13.2	13.5	96.2
	3 Neutral	1	1.9	1.9	98.1
	5 Very Unimportant	1	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	52	98.1	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.9		
Total		53	100.0		

How important is it for student success to have staff/teachers engage parents, including interacting with parents informally, sending home information, or calling parents when appropriate?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Very important	37	69.8	71.2	71.2
	2 Somewhat Important	12	22.6	23.1	94.2
	4 Somewhat Unimportant	2	3.8	3.8	98.1
	5 Very Unimportant	1	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	52	98.1	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.9		
Total		53	100.0		

Please select which afterschool attribute is most important of the two options

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Home/School Connection	35	66.0	68.6	68.6
	2 Professional Development	16	30.2	31.4	100.0
	Total	51	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.8		
Total		53	100.0		

Please select which afterschool attribute is most important of the two options

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Home/School Connection	11	20.8	21.6	21.6
	2 Measurable and Lasting Learning	40	75.5	78.4	100.0
	Total	51	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.8		
Total		53	100.0		

Please select which afterschool attribute is most important of the two options

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Home/School Connection	42	79.2	82.4	82.4
	2 Parent Involvement	9	17.0	17.6	100.0
	Total	51	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.8		
Total		53	100.0		

Please select which afterschool attribute is most important of the two options

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Positive Staff/Student Relationships	41	77.4	80.4	80.4
	2 Small Class Size	10	18.9	19.6	100.0
	Total	51	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.8		
Total		53	100.0		

Please select which afterschool attribute is most important of the two options

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Positive Staff/Student Relationships	41	77.4	80.4	80.4
	2 Professional Development	10	18.9	19.6	100.0
	Total	51	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.8		
Total		53	100.0		

Please select which afterschool attribute is most important of the two options

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Positive Staff/Student Relationships	32	60.4	62.7	62.7
	2 Measurable and Lasting Learning	19	35.8	37.3	100.0
	Total	51	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.8		
Total		53	100.0		

Please select which afterschool attribute is most important of the two options

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Positive Staff/Student Relationships	46	86.8	90.2	90.2
	2 Parent Involvement	5	9.4	9.8	100.0
	Total	51	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.8		
Total		53	100.0		

Please select which afterschool attribute is most important of the two options

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Small Class Size	34	64.2	66.7	66.7
	2 Professional Development	17	32.1	33.3	100.0
	Total	51	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.8		
Total		53	100.0		

Please select which afterschool attribute is most important of the two options

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Small Class Size	7	13.2	13.7	13.7
	2 Measurable & Lasting Learning	44	83.0	86.3	100.0
	Total	51	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.8		
Total		53	100.0		

Please select which afterschool attribute is most important of the two options

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Small Class Size	37	69.8	72.5	72.5
	2 Parent Involvement	14	26.4	27.5	100.0
	Total	51	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.8		
Total		53	100.0		

Please select which afterschool attribute is most important of the two options

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Professional Development	17	32.1	33.3	33.3
	2 Home/School Connection	34	64.2	66.7	100.0
	Total	51	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.8		
Total		53	100.0		

Please select which afterschool attribute is most important of the two options

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Professional Development	30	56.6	58.8	58.8
	2 Parent Development	21	39.6	41.2	100.0
	Total	51	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.8		
Total		53	100.0		

Please select which afterschool attribute is most important of the two options

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Professional Development	6	11.3	11.8	11.8
	2 Measurable & Lasting Learning	45	84.9	88.2	100.0
	Total	51	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.8		
Total		53	100.0		

Please select which afterschool attribute is most important of the two options

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Measurable & Lasting Learning	40	75.5	78.4	78.4
	2 Parent Involvement	11	20.8	21.6	100.0
	Total	51	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.8		
Total		53	100.0		

QID17 12. When staff/teachers do not use supplemental instruction to fill in students' learning gaps, how successful are students likely to be when returning to core instruction?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Very Successful	1	1.9	2.0	2.0
	3 Marginally Successful	39	73.6	76.5	78.4
	4 Not Successful	11	20.8	21.6	100.0
	Total	51	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.8		
Total		53	100.0		

QID18 13. How successful can afterschool program staff/teachers be if not using interventions for struggling readers?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Very Successful	2	3.8	4.0	4.0
	2 Successful	1	1.9	2.0	6.0
	3 Marginally Successful	27	50.9	54.0	60.0
	4 Not Successful	20	37.7	40.0	100.0
	Total	50	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	3	5.7		
Total		53	100.0		

QID19 14. How successful can afterschool program staff/teacher be by not using interventions to target the students' individual needs?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Very Successful	2	3.8	4.0	4.0
	2 Successful	1	1.9	2.0	6.0
	3 Marginally Successful	28	52.8	56.0	62.0
	4 Not Successful	19	35.8	38.0	100.0
	Total	50	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	3	5.7		
Total		53	100.0		

QID20 15. How successful can afterschool program interventions be if they do not build upon each other to support young people's ability to expand skills?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Very Successful	1	1.9	2.0	2.0
	3 Marginally Successful	34	64.2	68.0	70.0
	4 Not Successful	15	28.3	30.0	100.0
	Total	50	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	3	5.7		
Total		53	100.0		

QID21 16. How successful can afterschool program staff/teachers support engagement without using multiple learning techniques, such as project-based, hands-on experiences that relate to everyday life?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Very Successful	1	1.9	2.0	2.0
	2 Successful	7	13.2	14.0	16.0
	3 Marginally Successful	29	54.7	58.0	74.0
	4 Not Successful	13	24.5	26.0	100.0
	Total	50	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	3	5.7		
Total		53	100.0		

QID22 17. How successful can afterschool program staff/teachers be if not providing ongoing sessions so youth can participate often enough to achieve positive outcomes?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Very Successful	2	3.8	4.0	4.0
	2 Successful	3	5.7	6.0	10.0
	3 Marginally Successful	34	64.2	68.0	78.0
	4 Not Successful	11	20.8	22.0	100.0
	Total	50	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	3	5.7		
Total		53	100.0		

QID24 18. How successful are afterschool programs if staff/teachers do not teach basic skills for increasing comprehension?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Very Successful	1	1.9	2.0	2.0
	2 Successful	2	3.8	4.0	6.0
	3 Marginally Successful	33	62.3	66.0	72.0
	4 Not Successful	14	26.4	28.0	100.0
	Total	50	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	3	5.7		
Total		53	100.0		

QID25 19. How important is it for afterschool program staff/teachers to use formative assessments to help pinpoint interventions where students have learning gaps?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Very Important	30	56.6	60.0	60.0
	2 Somewhat Important	14	26.4	28.0	88.0
	3 Neutral	5	9.4	10.0	98.0
	5 Very Unimportant	1	1.9	2.0	100.0
	Total	50	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	3	5.7		
Total		53	100.0		

QID26 20. How important is it for afterschool program staff/teachers to use a blend of academic and developmental skill building activities for student success?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Very Important	36	67.9	72.0	72.0
	2 Somewhat Important	12	22.6	24.0	96.0
	3 Moderately important	2	3.8	4.0	100.0
	Total	50	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	3	5.7		
Total		53	100.0		

Appendix B

Survey Questions

1. How successful can afterschool programs be if they do not link home and school?

Very Successful Successful Marginally Successful Not Successful

2. How successful can afterschool program activities be by not meeting the various needs and skills of youth?

Very Successful Successful Marginally Successful Not Successful

3. How successful can afterschool program activities be while not meeting the intended program goals?

Very Successful Successful Marginally Successful Not Successful

4. How successful can afterschool programs be if the staff does not foster positive relationships with students?

Very Successful Successful Marginally Successful Not Successful

5. If teachers fail to use evidence-based instruction, how successful is the afterschool program?

Very Successful Successful Marginally Successful Not Successful

6. How successful can afterschool programs be if they do not implement a small class size (0-12 students)?

Very Successful Successful Marginally Successful Not Successful

7. How successful are afterschool programs when teachers fail to tailor their programming to the needs of the community?

Very Successful Successful Marginally Successful Not Successful

8. How important is it for staff/teachers to have well-designed and clearly communicated teacher development trainings?

Very Important Somewhat Important Neutral Somewhat Unimportant Very Unimportant

9. How important is it for staff/teachers to provide measurable and lasting learning for students?

Very Important Somewhat Important Neutral Somewhat Unimportant Very Unimportant

10. How important is it for student success to have staff/teachers engage parents, including interacting with parents informally, sending home information, or calling parents when appropriate?

Very Important Somewhat Important Neutral Somewhat Unimportant Very Unimportant

11. The paired comparisons will help identify which attributes are the most important in regard to afterschool programming.

Please select which afterschool attribute is most important of the two options in each column. Thanks!

Select which attribute is most important?	Select which attribute is most important?
Home/School Connection or Professional Development	Home/School Connection or Measurable & Lasting Learning
Home/School Connection or Parent Involvement	Positive Staff/Student Relationships or Small Class Size

Positive Staff/Student Relationships or Professional Development	Positive Staff/Student Relationships or Measurable & Lasting Learning
Positive Staff/Student Relationships or Parent Involvement	Small Class Size or Professional Development
Small Class Size or Measurable & Lasting Learning	Small Class Size or Parent Involvement
Professional Development or Home/School Connection	Professional Development or Parent Development
Professional Development or Measurable & Lasting Learning	Measurable & Lasting Learning or Parent Involvement

12. When staff/teachers do not use supplemental instruction to fill in students' learning gaps, how successful are students likely to be when returning to core instruction?

Very Successful Successful Marginally Successful Not Successful

13. How successful can afterschool program staff/teachers be if not using interventions for struggling readers?

Very Successful Successful Marginally Successful Not Successful

14. How successful can afterschool program staff/teacher be by not using interventions to target the students' individual needs?

Very Successful Successful Marginally Successful Not Successful

15. How successful can afterschool program interventions be if they do not build upon each other to support young people's ability to expand skills?

Very Successful Successful Marginally Successful Not Successful

16. How successful can afterschool program staff/teachers support engagement without using multiple learning techniques, such as project-based, hands-on experiences that relate to everyday life?

Very Successful Successful Marginally Successful Not Successful

17. How successful can afterschool program staff/teachers be if not providing ongoing sessions so youth can participate often enough to achieve positive outcomes?

Very Successful Successful Marginally Successful Not Successful

18. How successful can afterschool programs be if staff/teachers do not use basic skills for increasing comprehension?

Very Successful Successful Marginally Successful Not Successful

19. How important is it for afterschool program staff/teachers to use formative assessments to help pinpoint interventions where students have learning gaps?

Very Important Somewhat Important Neutral Somewhat Unimportant Very Unimportant

20. How important is it for afterschool program staff/teachers to use a blend of academic and developmental skill building activities for student success?

Very Important Somewhat Important Neutral Somewhat Unimportant Very Unimportant

21. The paired comparisons will help identify which attributes are the most important in regard to afterschool programming.

Please select which afterschool attribute is most important of the two options in each column.

Thanks!

Select which attribute is most important?

Supplemental Instruction or Formative Assessment
Formative Assessments or Academic & Developmental Skill Building

Select which attribute is most important?

Supplemental Instruction or Academic & Developmental Skill Building

Appendix C

Alignment of Survey Questions to Research Questions

RQ1: Based on afterschool director perceptions, what components determine the effectiveness of after-school programming for K-8th grade targeted service students?

RQ2: Based on afterschool director perceptions, which of those RQ1 components rank most highly in order of importance?

1. How successful can afterschool programs be if they do not link home and school?

2. How successful can afterschool program activities be by not meeting the various needs and skills of youth?

3. How successful can afterschool program activities be while not meeting the intended program goals?

4. How successful can afterschool programs be if the staff does not foster positive relationships with students?

5. If teachers fail to use evidence-based instruction, how successful is the afterschool program?

6. How successful can afterschool programs be if they do not implement a small class size (0-12 students)?

7. How successful are afterschool programs when teachers fail to tailor their programming to the needs of the community?

8. How important is it for staff/teachers to have well-designed and clearly communicated teacher development trainings?

9. How important is it for staff/teachers to provide measurable and lasting learning for students?

10. How important is it for student success to have staff/teachers engage parents, including interacting with parents informally, sending home information, or calling parents when appropriate?

11. The paired comparisons will help identify which attributes are the most important in regard to afterschool programming.

Please select which afterschool attribute is most important of the two options in each column. Thanks!

Select which attribute is most important?	Select which attribute is most important?
Home/School Connection or Professional Development	Home/School Connection or Measurable & Lasting Learning
Home/School Connection or Parent Involvement	Positive Staff/Student Relationships or Small Class Size
Positive Staff/Student Relationships or Professional Development	Positive Staff/Student Relationships or Measurable & Lasting Learning
Positive Staff/Student Relationships or Parent Involvement	Small Class Size or Professional Development
Small Class Size or Measurable & Lasting Learning	Small Class Size or Parent Involvement
Professional Development or Home/School Connection	Professional Development or Parent Development
Professional Development or Measurable & Lasting Learning	Measurable & Lasting Learning or Parent Involvement

RQ3: Based on afterschool director perceptions, what components determine the effectiveness of interventions for students who participate in afterschool programming for K-8th grade targeted service students?

RQ4: Based on afterschool director perceptions, which of those RQ3 components rank most highly in order of importance?

12. When staff/teachers do not use supplemental instruction to fill in students' learning gaps, how successful are students likely to be when returning to core instruction?

13. How successful can afterschool program staff/teachers be if not using interventions for struggling readers?

14. How successful can afterschool program staff/teacher be by not using interventions to target the students' individual needs?

15. How successful can afterschool program interventions be if they do not build upon each other to support young people's ability to expand skills?

16. How successful can afterschool program staff/teachers support engagement without using multiple learning techniques, such as project-based, hands-on experiences that relate to everyday life?

17. How successful can afterschool program staff/teachers be if not providing ongoing sessions so youth can participate often enough to achieve positive outcomes?

18. How successful can afterschool programs be if staff/teachers do not use basic skills for increasing comprehension?

19. How important is it for afterschool program staff/teachers to use formative assessments to help pinpoint interventions where students have learning gaps?

20. How important is it for afterschool program staff/teachers to use a blend of academic and developmental skill building activities for student success?

Very Important Somewhat Important Neutral Somewhat Unimportant Very Unimportant

21. The paired comparisons will help identify which attributes are the most important in regard to afterschool programming.

Please select which afterschool attribute is most important of the two options in each column. Thanks!

Select which attribute is most important?	Select which attribute is most important?
Supplemental Instruction or Formative Assessment	Supplemental Instruction or Academic & Developmental Skill Building
Formative Assessments or Academic & Developmental Skill Building	

Appendix D

Consent Form for Bethel University Research

You are invited to participate in a study of which components determine the effectiveness of afterschool programming for K-8th grade targeted service students. I hope to learn and understand what afterschool directors/coordinators feel are important to the work of effective afterschool programming in Minnesota and to make recommendations to afterschool programs to help future afterschool program directors/coordinators develop the skills and knowledge they will need to succeed in their roles. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a targeted services director/coordinator in Minnesota. This research is part of my Doctor of Education in Leadership in K12 Administration dissertation at Bethel University.

If you decide to participate, the survey questions look at which components determine the effectiveness of afterschool programming for K-8 grade targeted service students. The second part explores which components determine the effectiveness of interventions for K-8 grade targeted service students. The Bethel survey tool, Qualtrics, will be used for all survey questions. Participants will have three weeks to respond to the survey and a reminder will be sent out after the first and second weeks through Qualtrics. The survey questions will be sent to all Minnesota Area Learning Centers/Education Cooperatives that have targeted services programming through the state of Minnesota that can service K-8 students in afterschool programming. The sample will consist of Targeted Services Directors/Coordinators in Minnesota. This process will produce data to better understand how outcome areas are linked to long-term positive development, academics, and life-long success.

Any information obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will not be disclosed. In any written reports or publications, no one will be identified, or identifiable and only aggregate data will be presented.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relationship with Bethel University in any way. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without affecting such relationships.

This research project has been approved by my research advisor in accordance with Bethel's Levels of Review for Research with Humans. If you have any questions about the research and/or research participants' rights, please feel free to contact: Nate Hanson, EdD. Student, nrh63996@bethel.edu 2303 Bronco Lane, Buffalo, MN 55313, (763) 688.4012 or Mike Lindstrom, EdD Bethel Advisor: m-lindstrom@bethel.edu (612) 209.1739

After submitting the survey, you will receive a Thank You email with the opportunity to put your name in a random drawing for 1 of 7 gifts cards (2- $25 at Target and 5- $10 at Caribou).

By completing and returning the survey, you are granting consent to participate in this research.

Click HERE to take the survey.

Sincerely,

Nate Hanson
Bethel University Doctoral Candidate
nrh63996@bethel.edu