Adolescent Literacy Development in Out-of-School Time

A Practitioner's Guidebook

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Council Members

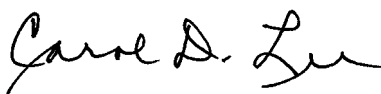# Signatories

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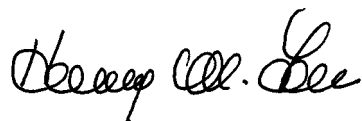Mary Laura Bragg

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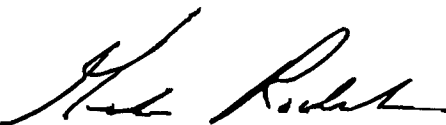
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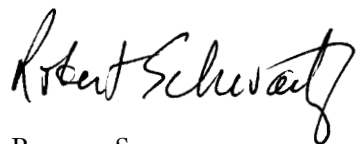
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Introduction

Welcome to the exciting field of adolescent literacy development. If you are reading this guidebook, then you probably care deeply about the healthy development of our young people, especially as it relates to safe and productive environments in out-of-school time (e.g., after school, summer time, and weekends). Perhaps you have heard some provocative statistics about the low levels of proficient and advanced adolescent readers throughout the U.S., particularly for minorities and low-income youth, and you're wondering how you can help. You may be aware of the growing literacy demands of an information-saturated global economy, which require increasingly higher-level reading and writing competencies from our students. You may also be wondering about how to enhance or create learning activities that will support classroom curricula and help students achieve advanced literacy skills.

In response to requests from out-of-school time (OST) providers, we have created this practitioner's guidebook for integrating adolescent literacy development initiatives into a wide variety of OST programs. As you will discover in subsequent chapters, our definition of adolescent literacy development represents a multi-dimensional view of how middle and high school students process written and oral language. We define literacy broadly as the reading and writing of written texts, but we include listening, speaking and performing as important aspects of communication that help people make sense of written texts.

More than ever, the out-of-school time movement in this country strives to engage young people in motivating and fun learning opportunities in the community, with increasing expectations to support participants' academic achievement. Afterschool and summer literacy programs come in all shapes and sizes, with varying goals and strategies for enhancing students'

reading and writing abilities. Some programs may target the most struggling readers using pre-packaged curriculum and certified teachers to "extend" the school day. Other programs focus on youth development goals, such as community leadership or youth violence prevention, and integrate literate practices into the content of their enrichment activities. Still other OST programs may fall in the middle of this literacy development continuum, offering homework help and individualized tutoring to support academic learning, while providing cultural, social, or recreational activities.

The strategies for addressing literacy in OST use a variety of approaches for boasting academic success. Depending on the literacy goals of the program, organizations may employ very different staffing, curriculum, materials and instructional methods. To help organize these approaches, this guidebook identifies four types of out-of-school programs that address literacy activities. We describe these types briefly here, but for a more detailed discussion of them see Chapter 2, as well as the research review of OST programs included in Chapter 2.

Literacy and Academic Development—Explicit literacy and academic instructional activities target students who struggle with basic literacy skills. Sometimes referred to as "remediation" programs, literacy specialists or trained tutors deliver one-on-one and small group instruction during the summer and after-school hours.

Literacy Enhancement—OST literacy enhancement programs engage young people of a range of abilities in using language creatively and purposefully. Through reading and writing comic books, poetry and novels, and information texts, students become motivated to use their communication skills and increase their literacy

abilities. Students often self-select to participate in these programs, flourishing in an educational environment that provides an alternative to the traditional school day.

Academic Enhancement—Many OST programs are not designed explicitly to address literacy development, but rather broadly incorporate academic achievement through homework help, educational games and other small group activities that build academic skills. Unlike out-of-school literacy instructional programs, academic enhancement activities generally do not adapt specific curricula, but rather use text-rich experiences to further the program's broader youth development goals.

Social Development—Students engage in educational enrichment activities that often require the use of literacy-related skills. For example, an adventure-based summer program may ask participants to write about their outdoor experiences each day. Although some out-of-school youth development programs track the academic achievement of their participants, program designs do not typically incorporate explicit literacy instruction.

Through intentional lesson plans and engaging project-based activities, these four approaches to OST literacy initiatives have tremendous potential in helping students achieve advanced communication skills.

This guidebook provides the best information to date on the various strategies for engaging youth in literate practices in structured afterschool, summer and weekend youth development programs. Chapter 1 includes the latest national statistics and implications of adolescent literacy achievement, a review of adolescent literacy research, and a summary of what researchers and educators know about the complex development of adolescent literacy proficiency. Chapter 2 highlights ten promising practices in OST programs that support adolescent literacy. Chapter 3 then summarizes key characteristics across the field. In Chapter 4, we offer several recommendations for moving the field forward in advancing adolescent literacy skills, organized in five programmatic areas: literacy foundations, student engagement and motivation, tutoring strategies, one-on-one support, and academic transfer. Our guidebook concludes with some ideas for planning and implementing strategies for expanding the adolescent literacy development repertoire of your program. Chapter 4 concludes the Guidebook by offering suggestions for goal setting, professional development, planning, student assessment, evaluation and continuous improvement. For those interested in the research base on adolescent literacy development in out-of-school time, an in-depth review of the research on out-of-school time programs and their role in and impact on literacy development is included in Appendix A.

TABLE №1. Four Categories for Adolescent Literacy Development Approaches in Out-of-School Time Programs

Adolescent Literacy Approach	Types of Literate Activities								
	Student Literacy Assessments	Classroom-based Remediation Instruction	Teacher-facilitated Tutoring Curriculum	Standardized Test Prep	Reading Tutoring by Staff or Volunteer	Homework Help	Language Arts Enrichment	Imbedded Reading and Writing Activities	Community Service with Reading or Writing Component
Literacy/Academic Development	●	●	●	●	●	🟤	🟤	🟠	🟠
Literacy Enhancement	🟠	🟠	🟠	🟠	🟤	🟠	●	●	🟤
Academic Enhancement	🟠	🟠	🟠	●	●	●	●	●	🟤
Social Development	🟠	🟠	🟠	🟠	🟠	🟤	🟤	●	●

Making the Case for Advancing Literacy Skills

Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a perspective on what adolescent literacy is, why out-of-school time (OST) practitioners should care about it, and current efforts to advance middle and high school literacy skills. Over the past decade, educators and policymakers have placed enormous emphasis on early literacy (grades pre-K through third), but have given less attention to adolescent literacy development. Statistics show that most adolescents in the United States lack the more advanced reading and writing skills necessary to succeed in higher education and the workplace. Nonprofits, education researchers, and textbook publishers now promote dozens of school-based adolescent literacy initiatives that provide new curriculum and instructional approaches, but do not always do enough to integrate youths' cultural backgrounds with teaching practices for engaging youth in deep and proficient reading and writing in the content areas. The out-of-school time community presents a unique opportunity to provide adolescent literacy development and enrichment that bridges the academic and social worlds of students.

Adolescent Literacy: What is it and Why Should OST Providers Care?

Many would agree that literacy, at its most basic level, refers to the reading and writing of print texts, and some scholars and policy makers prefer to maintain this tightly focused definition. However, in both popular parlance and scholarly usage many people go beyond that such a definition to expand what include acts such as reading a piece of art or a dance as forms of literate practice. Still others count virtually any knowledge as a type of literacy (e.g., "computer literacy"). In this guidebook, we want to acknowledge the many ways that people think of the term literacy,

while also focusing a definition of literacy enough to allow out-of-school providers to make planful decisions about literacy programs for youth in out of school time. By *planful* decisions about literacy, we mean programming that sets clear goals for the type of literacy skill or practice the providers want to develop or enhance in youth. Such programming also intentionally defines and assesses practices that help practitioners and youth achieve its stated goals.

To that end, we define literacy as reading and writing a variety of texts, which could range from alphabetic print to computer programming languages, mathematical symbols, or even choreographers' marks. We intentionally use a broad definition because such a definition allows us to acknowledge the importance of alphabetic print texts, which are *the* valued tool of schooling and in many jobs, while still allowing us to consider how other permanent textual forms (e.g., musical notation, play books, icons in a computer program) play a part in many out-of-school time literacy programs. This broader definition also recognizes the important role that forms of communication beyond printed text (e.g., talk, art, music) play in making sense of all sorts of "texts." Thus, two people talking about a book, a piece of choreography, or a mathematical equation are engaged in a literate practice, whereas two people simply having a conversation are engaged in oral practice. In short, literacy is much more than reading and writing the kinds of books you find in school.

Moreover, with the exponential growth in recent years of digital media, literacy and "texts" are evolving at a rapid rate. Think of instant-messaging and text-messaging, which a mere five or ten years ago were not common practices, but now are omnipresent in the lives of youth and increasingly so in the lives of adults. Digital technologies such as these, along with

the ongoing development of wireless technology and the Internet, have expanded our ideas of what advanced reading and writing skills entail. The linear reading of uninterrupted print—once thought to be the essence of advanced reading—is now complicated by hypermedia texts that can take a reader in many directions and by the coupling of print with images (often moving images), sound, and even opportunities for interaction.[1] Thus, *literacy* in the 21st century is a complicated concept, encompassing a range of communicative practices coming together in such a way that a reader or writer has to make meaning of print combined with other sources of information.

Adolescent Literacy Achievement

According to a variety of standardized test measures conducted over many years, the majority of young people today possess basic or better literacy skills—73 percent of 8th grade students, for example, according to data from National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). However, of that 73 percent, only 28 percent possess *proficient* reading skills and only three percent possess advanced reading skills.[2] What does it mean to possess basic, proficient, or advanced reading skills as an adolescent?

> A highly achieving student, whether at grade four, eight, or twelve, must not only comprehend passages of text but must also (1) integrate information across multiple texts, (2) critically relate paragraph meanings to personal experience, (3) employ knowledge from texts to evaluate science observations or historical documents, and (4) compose complete messages in the form of stories and reports for actual audiences. (Guthrie & Metsala, 1999)

Based on these expectations, NAEP data indicate that the majority of youth in the United States can name the main idea of a text passage (basic levels and above), but are struggling to achieve along the more specialized or advanced dimensions of literate practice outlined. (For more specific definitions of the NAEP achievement levels, see http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/reading/achieve.asp). Between 1998 and 2005 eighth grade reading achievement remained flat (showing no gains or losses), though that result is perhaps not surprising given the relative lack of attention devoted to adolescent literacy development

in public policy arenas before just recently (Perie, Grigg, & Donahue, 2005). However, large disparities in achievement persist for disadvantaged and minority populations, with the basic and below basic literacy achievement categories on the NAEP being populated by disproportionate numbers of youth of color and youth living in poverty. For example, only 12 percent of African Americans and 15 percent of Hispanic Americans scored proficient in eighth grade reading ability, compared to 39 percent proficiency for White students (Perie et al., 2005). Such statistics are particularly disturbing when one considers the following points:

> **Low literacy levels are highly correlated with high school drop-out rates.** The graduation rate in this country remains debatable due to most school districts' poor tracking of drop-outs. While the U.S. Census reports high school completion rates at an all-time high of around 85 percent nationally for adults age 25 and older (Stoops, 2004), other researchers estimate a high school graduation rate of approximately 67 percent, and as low as 50 percent or less for schools serving the urban poor (Swanson, 2001). For those who do drop out, several research studies have shown that failure in school often coincides with low reading and writing abilities (Raudenbush & Kasim, 1998).

> **Even for college bound high school graduates, literacy abilities are often not at levels allowing students to perform well in higher education.** Results of the college placement ACT test illustrate a dismal picture for advanced writing and reading abilities among our high school graduates. According to results of the 2009 ACT, only about half of all students have the literacy skills necessary for reading college-level texts (https://www.act.org/news/data/09/data.html). Only 20 percent of African Americans and 35 percent of Hispanic Americans tested with college-readiness reading skills on the 2009 ACT. In addition, in a longitudinal study of adolescent reading abilities, the ACT test prep organization showed

that there is a decline in student achievement for college-bound reading skills in secondary school. More students tested with sufficient College Readiness Benchmarks in reading in the 8th and 10th grades than they did in the 12th grade (Achieve, 2006).

Business leaders and policymakers have recently launched a public debate about the value of a high school diploma in the United States. In a recent speech to the National Governor's Association, Bill Gates said, "America's high schools are obsolete….Training the workforce of tomorrow with the high schools of today is like trying to teach kids about today's computers on a 50-year-old mainframe. It's the wrong tool for the times" (2005). The nation's failure to develop a progressive secondary level educational program has implications for a range of employment and social opportunities for an adult population. At its most basic level, U.S. citizenship is dependent on access to information via a variety of media sources. Regardless of the employment or social sector under consideration, adolescent literacy development is an urgent matter of public policy, since our schools now equip the majority of students (e.g., 66 percent of 8th grade students in 2005) with only basic or below basic literacy levels (Perie et al, 2005), and the majority of those at below basic literacy levels are youth of color and youth who already live in poverty.

In sum, we are not a country plagued by illiteracy, but the demands of a post-industrial global economy require literacy skills extending beyond the basic level. To be competitive in today's workplace and higher education arenas, young people must be adept at multiple ways of communicating and also must be able to process a constant streams of information. A digitized multimedia environment has spawned several new types of literacy identified in the research with terms such as *information literacy*, *multiliteracies*, *new literacies*, and *critical literacy* (Bruce, 2002; Luke, 2001; New London Group, 1996), which require people to communicate

in new ways. A world of access to vast amounts of unedited information on the Internet, as well as to hypertexts, email messaging, Instant Messaging, text messaging, blogs, and cell phone communication has had a profound impact on the ways many young people read, write, speak and manage information. The fact that certain groups of young people continue to lack access to basic technology devices (Moje *et al.*, 2006) suggests that a digital literacy divide continues to exist, a fact that has enormous implications for the economic and social futures of adolescents and emerging adults.

With these issues in mind, it is worth asking what research is being done in the field of adolescent literacy and what OST providers and educators can do to advance adolescent literacy in OST. In the next section, we briefly review existing areas of research and development.

Current Policy Initiatives to Advance Adolescent Literacy Skills

In the late-20th century, American schools and public policy began placing enormous attention on the acquisition of early literacy skills. As educators discovered that the effects of literacy challenges were cumulative and highly correlated to school success, the prevention of reading difficulties in the early grades (pre-K through third) became a focal point of education policy and school reform. The federal No Child Left Behind act underscores the importance of early literacy development in this country through standardized testing and targeted funding for the Reading Recovery program, an intervention for struggling young readers.

Although not sharing the limelight of early literacy development, the recent attention to advanced literacy skills in the adolescent years is not entirely new. At the federal level, policymakers have only recently acknowledged the importance of this wide-ranging field of study. In 2002, the National Institutes of Health convened a panel of experts on adolescent literacy, which resulted in several grants for longitudinal studies on the acquisition of literacy skills among middle and high school students. The work of this panel was followed by publications such as *Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy*, a report commissioned by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. *Reading Next* identified several strategies for "expanding the discussion of reading from Reading First—acquiring grade-level reading skills by third

grade—to *Reading Next*—acquiring the reading comprehension skills that can serve youth for a lifetime" (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004, p. 8). Through the report's recommendation of several instructional and infrastructure improvements, the authors make the case that dramatic changes in schools are necessary to effectively address the complexities of adolescent literacy development.

As a result of the increased attention brought about by the NIH panel and the publication of *Reading Next*, the U.S. Department of Education also launched the Striving Readers grant program, which targets school districts serving large groups of below basic readers with the goals to "…improve the quality of literacy instruction across the curriculum, provide intensive literacy interventions to struggling adolescent readers, and help to build a strong, scientific research base for identifying and replicating strategies that improve adolescent literacy skills" (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Eight states launched Striving Readers studies in the 2006-2007 school year and more Striving Readers studies are planned for the future.

What research guides these policy initiatives? It is often argued that there is little research in the field, but in reality research in adolescent literacy has been conducted since Harold Herber's (1973) conception of content-area literacy. The research agenda, though small and under-funded, has much to offer both in-school and OST educators as they develop curricula and programs. In what follows, we offer a brief review of research across a broad range of studies. For more detailed accounts, see the work of Phelps (2005) on the fields of adolescent and content area literacy and the work of Franzak (2006) on research on marginalized adolescents.

Research and Development in Adolescent Literacy

Not surprisingly, a good deal of research in adolescent literacy has focused on school and classroom settings. However, the *who* and *what* of those studies has varied widely, covering the gamut represented in the NAEP categories of below basic to proficient readers (with

studies typically only dedicating efforts to research on advanced readers as a way to identify what good readers do).

The Challenge of Struggling Readers

Many adolescent literacy studies focus on what are identified as *struggling* readers and writers who have not mastered basic processing despite being in fourth grade and beyond. These youth usually are challenged by basic vocabulary and do not perform well when confronted with long text passages. They often read

OST programs can partner with schools to offer youth opportunities to hone new literacy skills in the context of rich and meaningful activities.
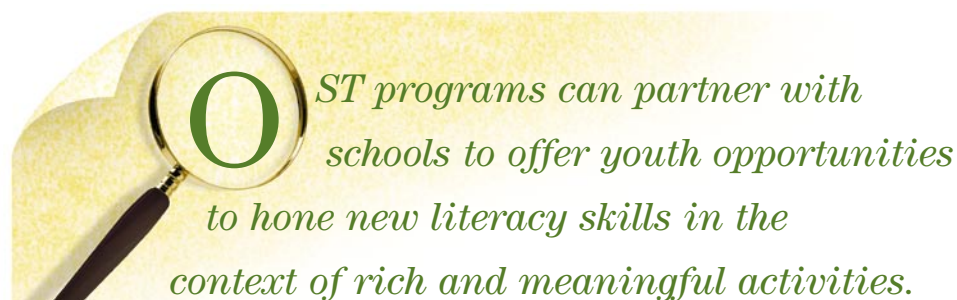
slowly, with poor fluency, and many also typically struggle with complex writing tasks. These youth may need help with one specific literacy skill, or they may experience challenges across a range of skills, including word knowledge, vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge, linguistic/textual knowledge, strategy use, and inference-making abilities. Instructional programs can range from those that focus on developing decoding skills to an emphasis on comprehension strategies (although the best programs typically offer the range of strategies with specific instruction targeted to students' particular needs). Many of these young people are provided with pull-out and supplemental reading programs (e.g., Calhoon, 2006). Although these programs provide intensive instruction in necessary basic skills, pull-outs also reduce time in much-needed content classes and eliminate the possibilities for struggling readers to explore elective courses such as art, music, and drama. This situation provides an instance where OST programs can partner with schools to offer youth opportunities to hone new literacy skills in the context of rich and meaningful activities.

A number of scholars have focused their research on teaching practices for developing the basic literacy skills of struggling middle and high school students

within regular classrooms (e.g., Deshler & Schumaker, 2005; Moore et al., 2000; McPartland, Balfanz, & Legters, 2006; Schoenbach, 2001; Schoenbach et al., 1999). The work of two of these groups—Strategic Instruction Model (Deshler & Schumaker, 2005) and Reading Apprenticeship (Schoenbach et al., 1999) extends beyond pull-out programs to the integration of basic literacy skills instruction in content areas classes. Both programs—have demonstrated strong programs for individual learning and whole-school reform through internal evaluations. These programs may thus serve as useful models of programmatic interventions for teaching adolescent literacy skills in or out of school.

In addition, other adolescent literacy scholars have produced basic research that examines the experiences of struggling youth. Gay Ivey (1999, 2004), David O'Brien (1998) and Mark Dressman (Dressman et al., 2005), among others, have developed case studies of the struggles of such youth, together with suggestions for interventions designed to ameliorate youth struggles. Alvermann (2001), Mahiri (1994), and Moje (2000) have also documented how some of these youth who struggle in school demonstrate high levels of reading and writing skill outside of school, albeit in tasks not typically associated with school literacy demands (e.g., trading Pokemon cards, playing video games, or writing graffiti).

Considering the "Basic" Reader

In addition, as indicated by the discussion of young people do not progress to proficient or advanced literacy levels, the field is concerned with the lack of more advanced reading and writing processing among adolescents. In many cases, these youth are reasonably able to decode words, but may struggle to read fluently or may not have broad, deep, and flexible vocabularies. This group of youth, who might be considered "basic" readers by NAEP standards, often need to learn how to set purposes for their reading, monitor their comprehension, and apply strategies for making sense of problematic texts. These youth can find themselves at a loss when their background knowledge cannot meet the demands of the text, a situation common for adolescents as they enter middle and high school settings, where they typically move from content area classroom to classroom.

In general, this is a group that has received less explicit attention and for whom few literacy teaching practices have been tested. That said, much of the elementary level comprehension research (e.g., Block & Pressley, 2002; Duke & Pearson, 2002; Fielding & Pearson, 1994; Hansen & Pearson, 1982; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995), and the entire early movement in content area reading and writing strategy instruction (e.g., Alvermann et al., 1987; Herber, 1978; Moore, 1996; Readence et al., 1989; Vacca & Vacca, 2004) was largely oriented toward supporting such youth (as well as the youth noted in the final category to be discussed).

Harold Herber (1973) coined the phrase *content-area reading*, also called secondary reading, which called for teachers to integrate literacy instruction in subject area instruction, such as in history, math, literature, and science. The content-literacy research and development agenda was premised on the idea that adolescents are still *learning to read*, as well as *reading to learn*, throughout middle and high school. A number of research studies—some in university labs and some in controlled classroom environments—were conducted on the efficacy of various literacy teaching practices, such as the use of advance organizers, brainstorming techniques, guided reading and writing strategies, and study strategies. Little traction has been gained, however, in bringing these research findings to school settings, primarily because little attention has been paid to the needs of this group of *basic* readers and because the structures of secondary schooling (e.g., numbers of students, departmental divisions) have inhibited large-scale application of the teaching practices that have been empirically tested (O'Brien et al., 1995). In addition, some have argued the strategies offered are presented in a way too generic to compel subject-matter teachers to take them up. OST educators, however, who may not work from the same disciplinary norms as secondary school teachers, may be more open to teaching reading and writing strategies, and might consider integrating such instruction into their program activities.

A host of textbook writers, schools, researchers and nonprofit groups have also designed interventions to address adolescent literacy development needs. Forty-eight adolescent literacy initiatives were highlighted in the Carnegie-sponsored book, *Informed Choices for Struggling Adolescent Readers*, (Deshler, Palincsar, Biancarosa, & Nair, 2007). The book provides a

snapshot of some popular programs designed to target adolescent literacy development. These initiatives are primarily interventions that provide new classroom curricula, supplemental instruction, or pedagogical approaches designed to increase literacy achievement for students in grades 4-12, although many of the recommended programs are based on research conducted at the elementary grades. Forty-two of the 48 programs reviewed focused on serving struggling readers, in part due to the authors' choice to focus on this population. Of key interest to OST educators may be the four programs identified by the authors as specifically being designed for use in an out-of-school context—Achieving Maximum Potential System (AMP), AfterSchool KidzLit, LitART, and Voyager TimeWarp Plus. Of these, the first and the last are specifically designed for struggling readers.

Several of the programs, such as the Failure Free Reading, Academy of Reading and Accelerated Reader, provide computer software to track student achievement and/or guide the teachers through instructional strategies. For example, in the Accelerated Reader program, students independently choose leveled reading materials at their own pace, then complete computer-based comprehension quizzes used by the teacher to assess student skills. However, the impact of such interventions is not well understood, and given the resource demands of the programs, OST programs need to think carefully before making investments in them. These may not be ideal options for OST contexts if technology resources are limited. What's more, many schools employ a number of the programs described in the *Informed Choices* book, and OST providers need to consider young people's reactions to receiving "more of the same" programming in out-of-school time (see Halpern, 2003a, 2003b).

READING IN THE DISCIPLINES OR SUBJECT AREAS

Adolescent literacy researchers have also studied those adolescents who are successful readers and writers of narrative and generalized expository texts, but who struggle with the demands of specialized or disciplinary texts. These youth might be considered proficient or advanced readers in one academic content area (e.g., science) and challenged or even struggling readers in another (e.g., English language arts). This group's struggle is captured by a quote from a young woman Moje once worked with, Heather, who stated that she "loved chemistry because it was all perfect, it all worked out," but simultaneously complained that she could never figure out the "hidden meanings" of her literature texts (Dillon & Moje, 1998). As stated previously, the work in content area literacy instruction has tried to address the needs of this group, but more recent work in disciplinary literacy (Bain, 2006; Hicks, 1995/1996; Lee, 2001) has begun to focus on the literacy demands placed on young people as they shift from one disciplinary or subject matter text to another across the secondary school landscape.

Specifically, being literate in a particular domain or subject matter requires basic processing skills, such as decoding and encoding, as well as the ability to define technical terms and relate them to use in everyday language. However, subject-matter literacy also requires the ability to comprehend ideas in a text by linking them with or contrasting them to one's own ideas about a phenomenon. This deep level of domain literacy requires knowing certain information, understanding the major concepts of the domain, and being able to define discipline-specific terms and phrases. Being literate in a domain also requires an understanding of how people in the disciplines generate ideas, an understanding of what counts as warrant or evidence for a claim, and an understanding of how to communicate that knowledge (Hicks, 1995/1996; Lee, 2001; Lemke, 1990; Moje et al., 2004a). A number of researchers are developing and testing curricula specific to these demands. For example, Brian Hand, a science researcher, and Lori Norton Meier, a literacy researcher, have teamed to develop writing instruction modules for early adolescents in science classrooms (Hand et al., 2004a; Hand et al., 2004b). Similarly, researchers in the Center for Highly Interactive Classrooms, Curriculum, and Computing (hi-ce) at the University of Michigan, have developed and studied literacy practices for teaching scientific explanation (Moje et al., 2004b) and working with texts (Text Tools Study Group, 2006) within project-based science units. In the area of English language arts, Carol Lee (1993) has analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively the value of teaching high-school aged youth to read canonical English literature by drawing from their everyday family and peer cultural

experiences, knowledge, and language practices. And historian and history educator, Robert Bain (2000, 2006) has developed classroom practices and professional development focused on supporting history and social science teachers work with texts in their classrooms. The results of these studies, among others, suggest that, in fact, teachers and administrators are becoming more and more interested in supporting students' learning from texts and that structured and explicit attention to the demands of text reading and writing in different disciplines can make a difference in student learning. Several of these initiatives also underscore the central role of drawing from young people's cultural backgrounds and funds of knowledge in developing strong literacy programs within content areas (Lee, 2001; Moje & Hinchman, 2004).

In addition, the adolescent literacy field offers an array of qualitative and ethnographic studies that have examined how and why individual or small groups of teachers use literacy instruction in their content classrooms (e.g., Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Hinchman & Zalewski, 1996; Moje, 1996; Moje et al., 2001; Morrell, 2002). These studies provide detailed analyses of the complexities of teaching young people to read and write with

proficiency across the disciplines, especially when grappling with demands to cover content information and with the routines and practices demanded by the disciplines.

Each of these studies and initiatives—alongside many others—have made an important contribution to classroom instruction focused on teaching young people to read and write texts within the disciplines and across the many contexts of secondary schools. And each of these examples can serve as possible sources of information for youth development OST programs, especially those interested in advancing young people's literate development while also engaging them in meaningful social and community projects. It should be noted, however, that it may be in this area of subject-matter or disciplinary learning where schools and out-of-school time programs are least similar and where transfer of literacy teaching and learning strategies may break down. That is, the literacy skills that are useful in constructing, for example, arts-based, multi-media, print-rich essays in a community-based arts program may not be the skills that are necessary to comprehend and synthesize concepts from ninth-grade biology texts or to write eleventh-grade U.S. history research reports (see also Halpern, 2003a, 2003b). Nevertheless, the ultimate goal of disciplinary literacy development— that of supporting youth in navigating across many different domains and communities—is one with which OST providers are likely to resonate.

With this research base in mind, you may also want to think about possibilities for expanding your efforts in adolescent literacy. In the next chapter, we outline some of the different types of programs we analyzed in our review of the literature and of existing programs. We describe the specific literacy activities and assessments of ten exemplary programs, to the extent that these details were available.

Advancing Literacy for Adolescents in Out of School Programs

Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a summary of the current landscape of adolescent literacy development programs in out-of-school time. Four types of OST programs are identified: literacy and academic development, literacy enhancement, academic enhancement and social development. Just as the field of OST programs encompasses a broad array of programs and services for youth, the methods of advancing literacy, too, are diverse, including a wide range of explicit and implicit activities. Ten promising programs are highlighted, according to the four types of programs identified above.

Making the Most of Adolescents' Out-of-School Time

Over the past three decades, practitioners have witnessed an amazing professionalization of the out-of-school time field. What used to be known as "school-age care" evolved in the 1980s and 90s from babysitting to educationally enriched youth development programs. These new programs have responded to the needs of families, schools and communities to provide safe, structured spaces for children and youth in the non-school hours. In 1992, the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development published *A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Nonschool Hours*, which focused national attention on the potential of high quality OST experiences for helping young people transition successfully to adulthood (1992). Colleges and universities now offer specialty degrees in youth development, as well as certification programs across the country.

Over time, youth development programs have increased the amount of educational opportunities they provide for students in the out-of-school hours, embracing a mix of youth development and academic

skill-building activities. In 1998, the National Institute on Out-of-School Time at Wellesley College published a report, *Homework Assistance and Out-of-School Time: Filling the Need, Finding a Balance*, which pressed the OST field to think more intentionally about the types of academic support they provide to students after school (O'Conner & McGuire, 1998). Policymakers, funders, and schools began to recognize the important role that out-of-school time programs play in the education of children. Harvard Education Press published *Afterschool Education: Approaches to an Emerging Field* in 2003 to present the range of academic activities available in the non-school hours and offer suggestions on advancing structured OST programs that bridge students' school and community experiences (Noam, Biancarosa & Dechausay, 2003).

The increased recognition and support for educational OST programs brought forth new expectations for what may be accomplished in the non-school hours. Funders began requesting that OST programs demonstrate their impact in terms of students' academic achievement. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, administered by the U.S. Department of Education and greatly expanded with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, allocated nearly $1 billion during the 2005-2006 school year to support such efforts. Grantees funded by 21st CCLC must track numerous school-related outcomes of their participants including school attendance, grades, and standardized test scores.

Today, the field of out-of-school time programs includes a vast array of enrichment opportunities for adolescents in a variety of contexts encompassing a myriad of activities. Nearly half (44.7 percent) of youth ages 13-18 report participating in some type of structured out-of-school activity other than sports (Junior Achievement, 2006). From teen drop-in

centers, to YMCAs, creative writing clubs, school-based extended learning programs and apprenticeship opportunities, organizations have become more intentional, innovative, and sophisticated than ever in responding to the academic and enrichment needs of young people during their non-school hours. One particular area of intentionality and innovation has been the development and/or enhancement of young people's literacy skills and strategies.

Types of Adolescent Literacy Initiatives in OST Programs

Enhancing adolescents' literacy abilities in structured out-of-school time programs represents a growing area of interest and expertise in this diverse mix of OST educational enrichment opportunities. On one end of the spectrum, schools and community-based agencies have developed a host of afterschool remedial tutoring programs that provide intensive one-on-one and small group instruction for the most struggling students. On an opposite end of the spectrum, project-based youth development programs are incorporating text-rich activities that provide highly motivating opportunities for young people to practice their reading and writing skills.

In this chapter, we identify four types of literacy initiatives that serve adolescents in their out-of-school time:

1. Literacy and academic development programs,
2. Literacy enhancement programs,
3. Academic enhancement programs, and
4. Social development programs.

We developed these categories through our previous review of the literature on OST programs (see Appendix A) and via interviews with nearly two dozen current OST programs across the U.S. (see Appendix B). The interviews with various programs reflect the diversity of adolescent literacy opportunities available in OST. Our four categories represent a continuum from the most explicit type of OST literacy education (i.e., literacy/academic development) to the most implicit OST activities that may incorporate literacy skills (i.e., social development). We understand that programs may not strictly align themselves with one category, but may blur across multiple initiatives. However, these distinctions are helpful in defining program goals around adolescent literacy development, and aligning these goals with specific

instructional or enrichment practices, as well as with professional development and assessment, topics that will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

1. Literacy and Academic Development Programs

OST literacy and academic development programs for adolescents work primarily with students who are performing academically below grade level. Many of these students will test "below basic" in reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Students rarely choose on their own to participate in literacy development programs, but are often referred to these services by a teacher or parent. There are many types of literacy and academic development initiatives that take place during the school day, such as pull-out tutoring programs and remedial classes. However, we will limit our discussion of adolescent literacy and academic development that takes place during the non-school hours.

The primary goal of a literacy and academic development program is to help students who test below basic in reading and writing achieve the skills necessary to become successful in school. The most common method of OST literacy instruction is one-on-one and small group tutoring. Sometimes this type of intervention is called *remediation* because it is assumed that the individual in need of intervention did not learn the skill when it was originally taught (or mediated) and thus needs a repeat of the teaching—or of the mediating—that should have occurred at a younger age or earlier stage of development. It is worth noting that although the emphasis in the original conception of *re-mediating* is on providing instructional support to make up for a previous instructional failure, the term *remediation* has come to connote a sense of failure in the young person, rather than in the instruction the students originally experienced. Indeed, building on Cole and Griffin (1986) and Luke and Elkins (2000), Alvermann and Rush (2004) have argued that educators should re-conceptualize *remediation* to focus on providing a different sort of instruction from that which the student had previously experienced, assuming that a student's lack of learning stemmed from the instruction, or mediation, rather than from a problem within the student. Instead, and ironically, remediation efforts typically take the form of "more of the same."

Indeed literacy development/remediation programs typically do not utilize project-based curriculum and educational enrichment opportunities, but rather attempt to build reading and writing strategies using students' homework assignments or a series of leveled reading materials. As outlined in our examples below, the more promising practices in literacy and academic development programs do not replicate classroom techniques, but rather assess student needs individually, design instruction based on these needs, emphasize the student's unique learning styles and personal challenges, and build nurturing relationships with tutors.

PROMISING PRACTICES OF LITERACY AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS[3]

The following program descriptions illustrate different approaches to literacy instruction in adolescents' out-of-school time. Strategic Tutoring in Topeka, Kansas, is a homework help program which helps students build strategies around information processing, comprehension and organizing key concepts in a way that can be replicated for future assignments. The Family Learning Institute in Ann Arbor, Michigan, uses a series of leveled reading materials to pinpoint students' literacy challenges and guide them through practicing and refining their literacy skills. Technology Goes Home @ School uses technology tools to increase student achievement and parent involvement, working specifically on digital literacy skills of youth.

Strategic Tutoring—
Center for Research on Learning

Developed by literacy experts at the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning, Strategic Tutoring responds to the literacy needs of students in multiple ways. First, strategic tutors provide content support for students by helping explain concepts and required prior knowledge as students complete homework assignments. Second, strategic tutors teach students the skills and strategies necessary for learner independence *while* they help students complete their assignments. Teaching students skills and strategies is designed to support students as they become independent learners who eventually are not dependent on tutors for academic success. Finally, strategic tutors act as mentors whose relationship with students helps students feel connected to learning and school.

Students feel that at least one person knows and understand how they learn and is supportive of them.

Strategic Tutoring also provides a curricular framework and training for leveraging volunteer tutors either one-on-one or in small groups of students who are struggling academically, including students with learning disabilities. The Strategic Tutoring program operates in five Topeka, Kansas public schools serving sixth through eighth-graders for 60 minutes afterschool at least three days per week. The program teaches students a variety of literacy strategies that can be replicated on future assignments, thereby helping students to become independent learners. For example, students work with a tutor in a subject area that is particularly challenging for them. After assessing students' needs, the tutor co-constructs a learning strategy with the student that will be helpful for successfully completing their homework. The tutor models how the strategy works taking care to demonstrate the procedural steps of the strategy and the self-regulating behaviors that help the learner monitor, evaluate, and modify the strategy. Finally, the tutor gradually assists the student in his or her own mastery of this learning process and the application of the strategy to other real world learning contexts.

Strategic Tutoring provides youth with a series of tools to assist them in successfully completing their school work. Many of the strategies can be used in multiple subject areas. For example, the PREP Strategy teaches students to approach expository text in a four-step process: (1) Preview the reading, (2) Read key paragraphs, (3) Express ideas in writing, and (4) Prepare study cards (see Hock, Deshler & Schumaker, 2000). The PREP Strategy may be used for drafting an essay, reading a textbook, or studying for a test in English, social studies, or history (Hock, Deshler & Schumaker, 2000). Tutors are trained in a variety of strategies, but they are also given the skills to develop new strategies with students on the spot. Strategic Tutoring is a unique program in that it combines literacy development with academic development, building from research in the area of content and disciplinary literacy that demonstrates the central role of literacy in making and representing knowledge in the different content areas of secondary schools. Thus, the program teaches youth the literacy skills necessary to succeed in the academic content areas and provides them with strategies for navigating the demands of texts in upper-level courses.

Strategic Tutoring combines an individualized instructional approach to literacy and academic development with an emphasis on student motivation, as well. Students participate in the Possible Selves self-exploration process as an integral part of the program, exploring their hopes and dreams for the future through a series of guided questions (Hock, Schumaker, Deshler, 2003). The Strategic Tutoring program has been shown to "be associated with improved test performance and improved semester grades as well as with improved knowledge of strategies and continued performance improvements even after tutoring has been discontinued" (Hock, Deshler & Schumaker, 2000, p. 5). The Strategic Tutoring and Possible Selves instructional manuals and tutor training DVD's are available for purchase through the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning (see Appendix C for contact information).

Family Learning Institute

The Family Learning Institute (FLI) of Ann Arbor, Michigan, serves low-income minority students, grade four to eight, who are reading two years below grade level on average when referred to the program by their school teacher. Since its inception in 2000, FLI has recruited more than 500 volunteers and served an equal number of students struggling with basic literacy skills. Students participate in a two-hour afterschool tutoring session once per week throughout the school year, which is tailored to their specific literacy needs. FLI's literacy development philosophy emphasizes not only the fundamentals of reading and writing, but also works to address students' affective behaviors towards learning, recognizing that adolescents struggling with literacy must overcome negative attitudes around their achievement.

Upon entry to the program, FLI participants take the Qualitative Reading Inventory (Leslie & Caldwell, 2000), a literacy assessment test that helps to identify areas where the students are struggling. The FLI teacher consultants, who are certified teachers with many years of teaching experience, interpret the results of the reading assessment and create a tutoring plan for the student. Based on these individualized plans, volunteer literacy coaches, who receive multiple trainings in adolescent literacy development, work with the students in one or more of the literacy skill areas: site words, vocabulary, phonics, spelling,

> "Now I think I'm different because I can read more and I know more and I can show off to other kids."
>
> **STEVEN**

> "My attitude changed—it changed from mad to, like, happy and stuff."
>
> **ANGELICA**

syllables, and comprehension. Student progress is tracked in personalized binders, which are monitored by the teacher consultants.

The Qualitative Reading Inventory assessment is administered to students every six months. A recent evaluation of assessment results shows that 75 percent of the youth increase their reading abilities by one to three grade levels in a six-month period. The FLI Director, Doris Sperling, credits the success of her program to the personalized attention each student receives from a caring adult coach. Sperling acknowledges the harmful stigma some students experience when reaching middle school unable to read and write. FLI provides opportunities for youth to work in private, individualized settings with a coach, with the goal of establishing a supportive, non-judgmental environment for the students to develop their literacy skills, self-confidence, and the "belief that they can learn."

Technology Goes Home @ School

Hosted by Mayor Thomas M. Menino and funded by the Boston Digital Bridge Foundation, Boston Public Schools coordinates Technology Goes Home @ School programs in 30 elementary, middle and high schools for students, grades 4-10, and their families. The goal of Technology Goes Home @ School is to use technology training as a catalyst to increase parent involvement in schools, build community connections, improve students' academic performance, and expand employment opportunities for adults. Technology Goes Home @ School enhances the digital literacy skills of child-adult pairs through 24 hours of hands-on instruction over the course of the school year.

School principals apply to become a Technology Goes Home @ School site, designating one to two teachers as technology instructors and recruiting 12-15 families to participate. Each site also employs a tech-savvy high school student from the Tech Boston Program, who serves as a tutor in the program. Technology Goes Home @ School requires that one adult parent or guardian commit to participating with the student in all after school and/or Saturday sessions, with specific meeting times varying by school. The program is popular among immigrant populations with low digital literacy skills, but also serves families of various economic, ethnic and technical backgrounds. Families must either own or purchase a computer to participate, and affordable computers with low-cost financing are available.

In addition to word processing and the basics of hardware operations, children and parents learn email composition, accessing information on the Internet, PowerPoint and Excel. Middle school students learn how to research the best high school options online, and high school students surf the web for information on college and careers. Parents practice updating their resumes. Curricula align with state education standards, and Technology Goes Home @ School instructors infuse trainings with strategies for increasing parental involvement in their children's schooling. Groups discuss homework expectations, safety in Internet surfing, and ways to stay connected to the school community.

Parents and students have multiple opportunities to strengthen their reading and writing skills throughout the training. For example, middle school students are asked to draft a letter of intent for why they want to attend high school. In the final training sessions, parents and students together create a PowerPoint presentation of their top four high school choices. For students or parents who are struggling with reading and writing, the high school tutor and teacher instructors provide one-on-one assistance. Technology Goes Home @ School reports that 92 percent of parents say their children's schoolwork improved significantly through involvement in the program, and 95 percent of the participants made significant improvements in their computer skills (accessed at http://www.dbfboston.org/statistics.html).

2. Literacy Enhancement

OST literacy enhancement programs are intended to engage adolescents in reading and writing activities in highly motivating environments. For the most part, students participate in activities voluntarily and come from a vast range of academic backgrounds. The primary purpose of the literacy enhancement program is to ignite student interest and excitement around text-rich experiences. Literacy enhancement providers hope that this enthusiasm will translate into improved academic performance or motivation to read and write, although these programs rarely offer explicit literacy instruction to those who are struggling with basic literacy skills. Instead, they immerse youth in literacy activities with the hope that young people will enhance literacy skills because they need those skills to successfully complete the activities of the program. At times, some higher-level literacy skills are taught (e.g., critical reading, persuasive writing), but these skills presume some basic reading and writing skill.

Many of the OST literacy enhancement programs focus on creative expression, personal identities, and youth development within their literacy frameworks. The degree to which programs integrate academic literacies and link themselves to relevant educational standards varies. However, these programs share a common pursuit of giving students the opportunity to practice their written and verbal communication skills, and to make reading and writing an important part of their everyday lives. Literacy enhancement programs also give students the chance to share their work with a broader audience, often leading to publication of their projects.

PROMISING PRACTICES OF EXEMPLARY LITERACY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS

The following literacy enhancement examples demonstrate how students may be motivated in a variety of ways including creative writing and argumentation. The Comic Book Project guides students through the development and publication of their own original comics. Youth Speaks blurs the boundaries between literacy enhancement and social development, as it revolves around creative writing through spoken word poetry, but also emphasizes the importance of students being able to express themselves and have their voices heard.

Urban Debate Leagues recruit mostly high school students to draft evidenced-based contrary opinions of current events and debate these arguments in public forums. The Youth Speaks and Urban Debate League programs have been replicated in multiple sites across the country.

Comic Book Stories from the Streets

"While professional comic books have traditionally been focused on superheroes, science fiction, and fantasized stories, many of the children's comic books were based on the hard reality of living in an inner-city environment. The children's work represents their lives as urban youth. They wrote about themes of drug abuse, gang violence, and harsh family situations, and in some case the stories had very sad, yet very real, conclusions" (Bitz, 2004, p. 580).

The Comic Book Project

The Comic Book Project, a national program hosted by the Teacher's College at Columbia University, partners with existing school- and community-based organizations to engage fourth through eighth grade students in reading, writing, designing and publishing comic books in afterschool and summer programs across the country. The program has three goals: academic reinforcement for students who are struggling in school, social skill building, and community building. Each year, The Comic Book Project chooses a theme for their publications, such as community or leadership, and encourages students to express their own unique identities creatively within the thematic area. Students work collaboratively in small groups to complete assignments, and therefore learn critical team participation skills.

Students meet in their The Comic Book Project clubs once or twice a week for about 90 minutes to work on constructing their stories. The Comic Book Project instructors are teachers and afterschool care providers who receive a half-day training in the program's curriculum and philosophy. Instructors learn to use the comic book as a vehicle for motivating students to engage in highly expressive literate activities. The Comic Book Project Founder Michael Bitz explains, "Everyone can create something as long

as they are thinking with an open mind. We want children to be discussing and sharing comic books, not comparing or competing against each other. Every comic book has something valuable to offer." Parents and the community are invited to a final display of students' published work at the end of the school year.

A 2002 qualitative analysis of The Comic Book Project sites in New York City showed that the 15-lesson program was successful in addressing four New York State English Language Arts standards. Students in grades five through eight who participated in The Comic Book Project practiced reading, writing, listening and speaking skills demonstrating comprehension, expression, critical analysis and social interaction. The vast majority of students (86 percent) responded that as a result of The Comic Book Project, they became better writers (Bitz, 2004). An unexpected outcome of The Comic Book Project is the extent to which students use the artistic medium to reflect on their lives and express harsh inner-city realities.

Youth Speaks

Youth Speaks, a San Francisco nonprofit with affiliate sites throughout the country, promotes youth voice through Spoken Word performance, education, and youth development activities because "…the next generation can speak for itself," explains Executive Director James Kass. In addition to performances, school assemblies, and artist-in-residency programs, Youth Speaks runs several drop-in afterschool workshops in schools and community centers around San Francisco, where young people have the opportunity to express themselves creatively through writing. The goals of afterschool workshops are to bring together youth of diverse backgrounds, give them tools to critically analyze and articulate issues important in their lives, increase their excitement about reading and writing, and revitalize the popularity of the poetic art form.

Afterschool workshops include open microphones, free writing exercises, poetry readings, and group discussions. A poet mentor, the lead staff person at a Youth Speaks afterschool site, facilitates student activities, such as the group palette, where poets brainstorm a list of words, then compose verses incorporating these words. Youth Speaks has developed curriculum to guide these afterschool sessions, a model that has been replicated in over 40

U.S. cities. Participants publish their work in spoken word anthologies and perform at national poetry slams.

Youth Speaks participants come from a variety of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. They also represent a broad range of reading and writing abilities. "We have a fair amount of kids who can't read or write, but still can create an interesting poem. Through creative modeling, we hope that young people will be motivated to learn the skills necessary… get them excited about print text," says Kass. Supporting young people through finding their own unique voices and reflecting on their personal experiences is critical to the Youth Speaks model. Poet mentors must have an intimate understanding of where young people are coming from and can relate on some level to the youth experience.

Urban Debate League

The first group of Urban Debate Leagues started in 1997 with seed funding from the Soros Foundation to offer low-income, minority youth the opportunity to compete and learn from academic debate, increase achievement, raise literacy scores, and prepare them for a successful transition to higher education. Today, there are 18 Urban Debate Leagues in middle and high schools in major cities throughout the country. Operated by schools, nonprofits and higher education institutions, the Urban Debate Leagues engage 4,500 students each year in public speaking, evidenced-based argumentation, responsiveness, and critical and strategic thinking skills.

The Urban Debate League model requires a substantial time commitment of its students and coaches, and participants rise to the challenge. The most comprehensive Urban Debate League sites begin with debate camps in August, followed by at least two afterschool sessions per week and one to two tournaments a month. The program concludes each year with national debates in May. Urban Debate Leagues are school-based; school systems make the initial requests to become an Urban Debate League site, and the teachers serve as debate coaches. For most Urban Debate Leagues, university debate partners play an important role in providing technical assistance, and community leaders serve on advisory boards supporting the program. The National Association for Urban Debate Leagues provides curricular handbooks for the coaches which

> "When I participated in the Urban Debate League in high school, I noticed that debate helped me to hone my ability to analyze social issues and their importance. However, it was not until I became an assistant debate coach in college at a local high school that I realized that UDLs do much more. Through debate, students are given the opportunity to make sense of their society and learn to formulate and support rational and logical arguments. The structure of competitive debate forces students to look outside their preconceived views, at both sides of an issue, and thereby deepens their ability to cope with complexity and to understand nuance."
>
> **VAN** :: *UDL participant*

> "I credit my experience in the Urban Debate League with setting me up to succeed. First, it made attending Northwestern seem like a very real possibility, since I debated on the campus and attended the summer institute while in the UDL. Second, it helped prepare me to submit a successful application. I learned how to organize my ideas for an essay. Debate sharpened my reading, writing, speaking and thinking skills, improving my grades and SAT scores. Third, I entered college with more self-confidence than many of my peers, even here. I can speak in front of other students, and often out-perform the most talented of them. The UDLs are just a really good college prep program."
>
> **TRACY** :: *UDL participant*

aligns debate instruction to academic standards, in addition to a range of other technical assistance. Many schools offer an elective debate class in addition to the afterschool program.

Each year, the Urban Debate Leagues focus their attention on a common topic. For the 2005-2006 school year, participants debated domestic issues around "Civil Liberties and the War on Terror." During weekly afterschool sessions, students learn the techniques of academic debate, prepare briefs on their topic, and practice mini-debates and rebuttals. At their monthly debate competitions, students wheel around large tubs of documentation that includes their pre-prepared arguments providing evidence both for and against the current issue.

Winning the debate requires both substantial, prepared evidence and thinking critically and under time pressure to rigorously answer every one of their competitor's arguments.

Program developers observe the nature of the debates, as well as the relevance of the topics discussed. Results from a control-group study of high school debaters and non-debaters in four cities reveal that "academic debate improves performance at statistically significant levels on reading test scores, diminishes high-risk behavior.

3. Academic Enhancement

Several programs address literacy development within the larger context of boosting students' academic achievement in their out-of-school time. We identify these as *academic enhancement* programs, recognizing that their missions are often two-fold—to provide a safe, structured afterschool space for students to develop their social skills, and to offer educational enrichment that will enhance students' academic abilities. Participants may reflect a wide range of achievement, but some programs particularly target the lowest performing students. Unlike literacy/ academic development and literacy enhancement programs, the acquisition of reading and writing skills is not central to programmatic objectives, but still may be addressed through a variety of educational activities.

High quality academic enhancement programs present a comprehensive enrichment menu of activities, often offering youth choices of which activities they would like to participate in. The programs include a combination of homework help and intriguing project-based educational activities. These programs also provide recreation and leisure time for the students and stress the importance of building caring adult relationships among students, staff and volunteers.

PROMISING PRACTICES OF EXEMPLARY ACADEMIC ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS

Two promising practices in academic enhancement, the national Citizen Schools program and Open Door of Maryland, exemplify a multifaceted approach to educational enrichment opportunities in the non-school hours. Both programs provide homework help, recreation and project-based learning. Citizen Schools incorporates a civic engagement model where community professionals volunteer as instructors in a variety of apprenticeship programs that lead to youth-led service projects. Open Door uses a pre-packaged curriculum with games and craft projects to deliver standards-based enrichment activities in reading and math. Both Citizen Schools and Open Door provide education imbedded in highly motivating activities; however, unlike literacy development programs, these academic enhancement opportunities do not include literacy strategies or instruction tailored to the specific needs of their participants.

Citizen Schools

Citizen Schools operates afterschool apprenticeship programs in 30 middle schools across five states, serving low-income urban students. Sessions run four to five days per week with at least one staff person for every 12 students. The goal of Citizen Schools is to prepare students for leadership in the 21st Century by helping students strengthen their academic skills, develop personal leadership skills, facilitate access to resources, and build community connections. Each week, students participate in homework help, apprenticeship classes, field trips and recreational activities.

One of the unique and engaging aspects of the Citizen Schools model is the weekly apprenticeship opportunities, which leverage professional volunteers from the community as instructors in a variety of fields, such as web design, architecture, and the legal system. The final products of apprenticeship programs become community service projects such as building a school website, or presenting an opinion before a federal judge. Students become highly motivated to learn new skills and strengthen their academic abilities through a real life application of their work. Students present their final projects at events called Wows! attended by parents, school staff and community members.

Citizen Schools' campuses also work to create an empowering culture around learning for their participants. Each week begins and ends with a large-group circle where youth share their projects and are recognized for achievements. Weekly School Navigation sessions provide tools and learning strategies for succeeding in school, such as time management, test preparation and test taking strategies. Citizen Schools tries to instill in all students the value of education and a belief that working smart and working hard will translate into higher academic performance.

A third-party evaluation of Citizen Schools shows that student participants made greater gains in math scores and were more likely to be promoted to the next grade and less likely to miss school, as compared to a matched non-participant sample. However, participant English grades and school suspensions were similar to their matched non-participant sample (Fabiano, Pearson & Williams, 2005), a point that may suggest a focus more explicitly on literacy development or enhancement within this academic enhancement program.

Open Door

Established in 1983, Open Door is a licensed, nonprofit school-age care provider in Maryland, serving 37 schools throughout the greater Metropolitan Baltimore area. The mission of Open Door is to provide quality services for children before school, after school, and all day in the summer and on school holidays, responding to the needs of families for safe, nurturing, extended-day environments. The Open Door programs also work to promote children's confidence and self-esteem by enhancing academic success. In 2003 and 2005, Open Door was rated the state's best afterschool program by readers of Maryland Family Magazine.

The Open Door program offers several academic enhancement options that students may participate in on a daily basis. Open Door hires at least one teacher from each school to serve as Homework Coach, offering one-on-one and small group instruction for one hour after school each day. The program also provides a homework help quiet corner, where students may work independently and occasionally receive assistance from Open Door staff.

Students also have the choice to participate in one hour of interactive educational enrichment projects. Open Door uses the pre-packaged Camelot Learning curricula, which provides project-based academic activities for students in grades three to six. Camelot Learning features themes like Animal Kingdom, Ancient Egyptians, and Ancient African Cultures that teach standards-based math and reading skills through games, arts and crafts. In a pre/post-test control group experiment of Camelot Learning math curriculum at five schools, participants showed a 6-18 percent gain in learning above their control group peers. Open Door organizes monthly open houses at each school

for students to showcase their Camelot Learning projects to school staff, parents and community members. Although Camelot Learning activities are optional for Open Door students during the school year, staff estimates that approximately 80 percent of their participants choose to engage in these interactive activities.

What distinguishes this academic development program from the literacy development program, Strategic Tutoring, is that Open Door, although hoping to affect change in reading achievement, does not specifically target literacy development as its goal. The work of Open Door is more generally focused on broad academic enhancement. Strategic Tutoring, by contrast, assumes that broad academic enhancement and development occur through literacy development.

4. Social Development

Social development out-of-school time programs work to support the social and emotional development of students, such as conflict-resolution skills or character building, with less of an emphasis on the academics. However, social development programs may implicitly require a particular literacy competency through structured activities in the program. For example, students on a camping trip may be asked to reflect on their experiences each day by writing in a journal. However, unlike academic enhancement initiatives, social development programs for the most part do not imbed standards-based educational content within their activities with the specific aims of increasing grades or achievement scores, nor do social development programs typically provide literacy instruction, even when engaging youth in activities that require literate skill.

PROMISING PRACTICES OF EXEMPLARY SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The out-of-school time field includes hundreds of examples of social enhancement programs that incorporate literate activities. The programs highlighted here, Trail Blazers and Mosaic Youth Theatre, represent two different approaches to supporting the social and emotional development of youth. Adventure-based Trail Blazers in New York and New Jersey provides wilderness excursions for inner-city youth with extra support from educational experts. The Mosaic theatre arts program works to

instill responsibility and a strong work ethic among children and youth performers through acting, music and dance.

Trail Blazers

Based in New York City, Trail Blazers provides three-week adventure-based educational enrichment programs for inner-city youth over summer vacation. Children and youth are recruited from NYC and urban New Jersey to participate in wilderness survival projects at a remote New Jersey campsite. Trail Blazers seeks to help young people build values for life by increasing their ability to make positive life choices in challenging environments.

Daily Trail Blazers activities include basic survival tasks and campsite management, an hour of unstructured reading and writing, and educational enrichment projects. Youth must rotate the responsibilities of group recorder, who transcribes the events of each day. Youth also identify themes of interest and work collaboratively on group presentations. For example, one group of middle school girls identified the theme of *gods and goddesses*, studied the constellations, and composed a play about their characters.

Although the organization's history dates back more than a hundred years, the program is continuously improving the services and opportunities it provides to youth. Trail Blazers recently became a state-designated Supplemental Education Services (SES) provider, as outlined in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which entitles the program to NCLB funding and resources. As a result, the program hired an education director to standardize curriculum and now has an on-site literacy specialist to work one-on-one with students struggling with reading and writing.

Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit

The Mosaic Youth Theatre program in downtown Detroit recruits children and youth, ages 8-18, to participate in a weekly afterschool and summer program that showcases their talents in theatrical arts and music by creating original productions and performing on stages around the U.S. and internationally. Mosaic uses the arts as a medium for positive youth development, seeking to "empower young people to create positive changes in their lives and communities by helping them to develop patterns

> "The love in the air when you come to Mosaic is amazing. I've learned so much and gained friendships with people with different backgrounds and personalities. The program's youth support director has helped me tremendously, and the little things my directors and fellow ensemble artists have said, like 'Good Job' or 'Nice work on stage,' have really made a difference in my life."
>
> **MARIO** :: *Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit participant*

> "Mosaic has taught me how to be me. Before Mosaic, I wouldn't talk to many people and couldn't sing in front of people without being nervous. *Now That I Can Dance* gave me a sense of confidence and a more positive attitude about what I can do in life. Another great thing about Mosaic is we have so much fun and still get our work accomplished. It teaches us young artists how to manage our time, something we'll definitely have to do when we reach college."
>
> **TANGELA** :: *Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit participant*

of cooperation, disciplined work habits and effective problem-solving skills…" (Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit, 2002). Mosaic boasts a more than 95 percent college placement rate among its graduating high school seniors.

Youth participating in the afterschool program are expected to attend two weekday evening sessions and one four-hour Sunday session each week. Activities include learning the crafts of theatrical and music arts, conducting research for productions, and practicing future performances. Themes and storylines delve into personal and social issues that are relevant to the young participants, such as the history of Motown and the influence of teenagers in the early days of Motown's history in Detroit and tensions between city and suburban teens (presented through a modern retelling of Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors). Performers enhance their literacy skills by researching historical documents, studying various performances styles and traditions, interpreting the work of different playwrights and composers, recording oral histories of Detroit residents, drafting dialogue, writing lyrics, and perfecting their oral communication skills.

Rick Sperling, Mosaic Founder and Chief Executive Officer, credits their success to setting high expectations for participants and teaching professionalism. The organization's motto is, "only the best, nothing less," and students have the opportunity to experience performing at "their best" at dozens of performances throughout the year. "A lot of people talk about excellence, but these young artists get a chance to feel it in their bones," explains Sperling. When it comes to developing their communication skills, Mosaic staff experiment with multiple strategies to help students achieve excellence in expressing themselves creatively. For example, instructors will videotape student improvisations and ask the students to transcribe their work. Two full-time youth support staff members help to troubleshoot issues that participants are having with school, family, and other competing obligations.

Sperling reports that preliminary results from a longitudinal study of Mosaic outcomes show that among participants who arrive at Mosaic failing in school, they experience an average 1.5 increase in grades over the school year. "We see young people completely different when they leave… more confident and able to communicate and present themselves," says Sperling.

Key Characteristics of Adolescent Literacy OST Programs

Interviews and reviews of the curricula of nearly two dozen out-of-school time programs (including those featured in Chapter 2) revealed a number of common program elements that providers pursue in developing quality educational enrichment activities. Although claims about the quality of these programs have not been scientifically verified, each exemplar provides some evidence that participants are benefiting from the services they provide. We also reviewed the literature on out-of-school time research and best practices. We found, as many researchers have noted, a lack of definitive outcome information based on rigorous experimental studies, accompanied by a lack of carefully detailed process information from rich qualitative or ethnographic studies (see Appendix A). However, a great deal has been written about promising practices and quality programming, and several themes in policy briefs and program evaluations underscored common elements discussed in our program interviews.

In general, the OST programs seeking to advance academic achievement worked to capitalize on their small instructor to student ratios to provide individualized tutoring and small group support. The programs also focused earnestly on building positive, caring relationships among students and staff. Educational opportunities were contextual, fun and engaging, relating topics to the everyday lives of students and their interests. Curricula are intentional and well-organized with a variety of text materials available to students. The programs avoided structures and instructional styles that would be considered "school-like," and instead created an environment that bridged students' academic and social worlds. In addition, many of the promising practices offered sustained benefits through multiple-year programming for their students.

In reviewing promising practices and the literature, we found that activities that support adolescent literacy development in out-of-school time incorporated four common programmatic elements to advance learning in their programs: meaningful content, youth development principles, school linkages and parental involvement.

Meaningful Content

All of the promising practices developed curricula, lesson plans and activities that were meaningful to their participants. Through these intentional efforts to link learning to students' everyday experiences and interests, participants were motivated to practice and enhance their literacy skills. Research shows content does not need to be strictly instructional to experience achievement gains in out-of-school time programs. A combination of enrichment activities and academic skill-building can make a difference (Birmingham, Pechman, Russell & Mielke, 2005). More to the point, academic skill building can take many forms. It does not have to follow a strict set of procedures and it can be deeply embedded within meaningful activities.

Some of the ways that OST programs engaged students in meaningful content that addresses literacy development included:

- **Creating fun and engaging curriculum that is project-based and responsive to student interests.** Several programs embed academic skill-building into art projects, creative writing, theatre and even cooking class. Other programs identified topics according to student career interests, such as public interest law or web design. Still others used pop culture as a lure infusing lessons in hip-hop music and spoken word poetry with literacy enhancement. One study of 21st Century Community Learning Centers found programs that

combined academic and enrichment activities made greater achievement gains than programs focused exclusively on the academics (VanEgeren, Wu, Hawkins & Reed, 2006).

■ **Incorporating learning strategies as an integral part of homework help.** We now know that homework help is not about giving students the answers, or even standing back and waiting to check their work. Proficient learners automate a series of information processing and comprehension strategies when tackling a homework assignment. These strategies can be taught to struggling students in small groups and one-on-one tutoring sessions.

■ **Designing and incorporating productive learning spaces and materials.** Programs create special quite corners and offer a variety of reading materials for students. Homework support includes dictionaries, computers, Internet, and other reference books to support learning. A "material literacy environment" is critical for fostering reading and writing skills, especially in low-income neighborhoods where students may not have access to these materials at home (Halpern 2003a, 2003b).

■ **Reflecting student cultural and community backgrounds in OST activities.** A number of research studies have confirmed that students learn better with teaching that is culturally competent (for a list of research articles on this topic, see Noam, Biancarosa & Dechausay, 2003, p. 10). Programs like the Comic Book Project intentionally choose topics that will provide students opportunities to reflect on their own personal identities, such as leadership or community. Mosaic Youth Theatre coordinated neighborhood fieldtrips where students recorded living histories of Detroit residents and then used these stories to construct a play.

■ **Providing practical applications and audiences for student work.** Whether it's publishing creative writing, performing a play, or using their newly acquired skills to volunteer in the community, students benefit from seeing a return on their investment (Skilton-Sylvester, 2002). In several programs, like Open Door and Citizen Schools, students present projects at monthly open house events for parents and the community.

■ **Offering specialized instruction and support for those struggling with basic reading and writing skills.** Several programs recruit school teachers to work one or more hours in their afterschool programs as homework coaches and tutors. Other programs recruit volunteers, such as trained college students and Experience Corps members, to provide one-on-one tutoring for students. One recent meta-analysis of OST programs found that one-on-one tutoring for at-risk students produces positive effects on student achievement (Lauer et al., 2006), however, other types of program structures were not available for evaluation and thus it should not be concluded that one-on-one arrangements are the only promising context for struggling students. The Breakthrough Collaborative, a national summer program for middle school youth, uses high school and college volunteers to run all of their instructional activities. Cross-age tutoring has been shown to increase academic achievement among not only the recipients of instruction, but also for the tutors (Paterson & Elliott, 2006).

■ **Expanding the learning space beyond the school building.** Although many of the promising practices are school-based, co-located in school buildings that stay open late into the evenings, providers hardly believe that the locus of learning is limited to traditional classrooms. Experiential learning through fieldtrips is common place in high quality OST programs. For example, the DC Creative Writing Workshop teaches a unit on tolerance that includes a visit to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC. Trail Blazers uses a rustic site in New Jersey wilderness as their learning space.

Youth Development Principles

Over the past fifteen years, the term "youth development" has evolved to define a field and philosophy for providing support to young people. The National Collaboration for Youth defines the youth development approach as "a process which prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically and cognitively competent. Positive youth development addresses the broader developmental needs of youth, in contrast to deficit-based models which focus solely on youth problems" (National Collaboration for Youth, 1998, in Hall, Yohalem, Tolman & Wilson, 2003, p. 9).

In Larson's (2000) research on student initiative, structured out-of-school time programs featuring youth development activities were found to be unique experiences in the lives of youth where they feel both highly motivated and engaged in complex tasks requiring concentration. Larson compares these experiences with student engagement in school, which he found to be primarily characterized by high concentration and low motivation, and with instances where students socialize with peers, which is primarily characterized by low concentration and high motivation. Larson believes youth development

> *Several of the programs interviewed identify core youth development values as essential ingredients in their programming models.*

programs have great potential for fostering positive development, arguing that "[c]hildren become alive in these activities, they become active agents in ways that rarely happen in other parts of their lives" (2000, p. 178).

If we agree that youth motivation is critically important in adolescent literacy development, then it may follow that the application of the youth development principles can increase the effectiveness of literacy enhancement activities in OST programs. Several of the programs interviewed identify core youth development values as essential ingredients in their programming models. Here are two youth development principles prevalent in our promising practices:

- **Youth as leaders in steering afterschool agendas.** Larson envisions youth development programs where "[e]ach activity would have enough structure so that youths are challenged, but also enough flexibility so that, as youths gain experience, they assume responsibility for the direction of the activity" (2000, p. 182). Research shows that successful youth development programs provide youth the opportunity to assume leadership roles in managing activities and shaping policies (McLaughlin, Irby & Langman, 2001). OST

programs nurture youth leadership by seeking their input on enrichment activities, organizing a youth board that reviews program policy decisions, and facilitating youth-led service projects. At the Sunset Neighborhood Beacon Center afterschool program in San Francisco, students help determine which educational clubs will be offered each year, and the project coordinators work to insure that activities such as hip-hop club include literacy development content. Although the question of who leads a youth program may seem far removed from the question of how to develop OST programs that focus on literacy development, the relationship between leadership opportunities and literacy development is strong. Leadership opportunities motivate youth to engage and stay engaged, and as discussed in Chapter 1, the role of motivation is well documented in literacy development. In addition, in their roles as organizers and leaders of the programs, young people find themselves needing to communicate effectively and strategically in oral, written, and performative forms. This need to communicate can motivate a kind of literacy development that transcends the perfunctory performances motivated by less than authentic tasks such as school tests and assignments (see Kirschner & Geil, 2006).

- **Activities that cultivate the youth voice.** Young people often express frustration over their disenfranchised positions in society. Quality youth programming works on two fronts to encourage young people to express themselves, and to breakdown barriers for having their voices heard. The Youth Speaks slogan, "because the next generation can speak for itself," exemplifies this commitment to accessing, celebrating and promoting genuine youth communication. In reviewing evaluations of the The Comic Book Project, it becomes difficult to tease apart if students are motivated to participate because the genre is comic books, or because the genre is used as a medium for expressing their personal fears, anxieties and frustrations about living in inner-city

America. One might suspect that students would not approach The Comic Book Project with equal enthusiasm if the topic revolved around the American Revolution, for example. Facilitating a creative process by which youth interject their own original thoughts and views works to assure them that their opinions have value and can contribute in a positive way.

School Linkages

Promising practices in adolescents' out-of-school time recognized the importance of collaborating with schools and developing curricula that aligned with educational standards. One recommendation of the Carnegie Corporation of New York in *A Matter of Time* was to encourage more school and community partnerships to support the healthy development of young people: "Schools should work with community agencies to construct a unified system of youth development, a joint enterprise that recognizes the common goals of schools and community agencies while respecting their inherent differences and strengths" (1992, p. 114).

OST programs seek a balance between connecting with schools, but yet maintaining some independence so as not to appear an extension of the regular school day. In terms of advancing adolescent literacy development, programs interviewed identified several ways that of partnering with schools:

■ **Co-location of the afterschool program in the school building.** Educators and policymakers have come a long way in the past ten years in changing school culture so that buildings stay open late. Although the vast majority of programs interviewed share space in school buildings, they did not express a litany challenges over this arrangement. Most programs explained that there services were requested by a principal or teacher, and therefore there presence was a welcome site. Schools can provide wonderful literacy-rich environments with libraries, computers, textbooks, writing supplies and other reference materials.

■ **Standards and curricular alignment.** Several of the programs wrote curricula that supported state educational standards. Programs also included classroom content through homework help opportunities. The DC Creative Writing Workshop placed creative writers as "artists in residence" teachers in the classrooms in addition to running afterschool programs. This dual role allowed the instructors to transfer lesson plans from school to afterschool, and vice versa. The Urban Debate Leagues also offer in-school debate electives for participants of their afterschool programs.

■ **School referrals and case management.** Programs often receive teacher referrals to enroll participants who are struggling academically. At the Sunset Neighborhood Beacon Center afterschool program in San Francisco, the OST director interacted on a weekly basis with a student care team responsible for coordinating services and interventions for the most struggling students. Returning the favor by keeping school personnel informed of youth literacy progress in the OST setting is one way that OST programs can contribute back to schools and support youth literacy development across in and out-of-school contexts.

- **Innovative teacher roles.** Teachers can provide literacy expertise that afterschool staff lack. Many programs employ teachers as afterschool tutors and activity facilitators. Others recruit teachers as educational consultants and school liaisons, writing curriculum, aligning activities with content, and interacting with school administrators. When we asked the programs how staff respond if a participant in struggling with reading or writing, the most common response was to refer the youth to a teacher liaison person employed by the OST program.

Parental Involvement

The programs presented very different views on involving parents in their OST activities. All of the programs required parental permission for participation in the program, and rely on adults to transport students to and from their programs. However, some of the programs interviewed intentionally do not seek any additional input or roles of parents and guardians, offering older adolescents' a space that Youth Speaks Executive Director James Kass describes as "…not impinged by the traditional authority figures in their lives." Other programs felt strongly that parental involvement should not be a requirement for student participation, as some students do not have support at home. However, another group of programs developed creative ways to involve the parents, especially programs serving younger adolescents:

- **Parents as audience members.** This is the most common type of parent involvement activity. Parents are often invited along with school staff and community members to view events where students perform or otherwise display their work. Mosaic Youth Theatre uses this captive group as a social skills development opportunity by asking students to mingle, interact and communicate with their adult audience after each performance. The opportunity to interact with adult audience members builds participants' communication skills, enhancing their vocabulary and use of language.
- **Parents as collaborators.** Some programs view parents as allies in advancing student academic achievement. Citizen Schools communicate with parents by telephone at least twice a month to discuss student progress and develop strategies to overcome student challenges. A fair amount of

research makes the case that children with parental figures invested in their educational outcomes make greater academic progress than those without parental support (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Communication with the parents also provides opportunities for OST providers to discuss any challenges the young person may be having specific to reading or writing, helping to insure that the student receives additional support if necessary.

- **Parents as resources.** A small group of OST providers recruit parents as staff and volunteers in their programs. These programs take what educators are calling a "funds of knowledge" approach (see Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005), which places a high value on the gifts and talents of their parent (or community) population, enlisting their support in the delivery of OST activities. Parents serve as fieldtrip chaperones, tutors, project facilitators, and advisors. This inclusion of parents as resources encourages youth to engage family members in literate activities, extending the learning space beyond school and the OST program.

The program descriptions and key characteristics outlined in this chapter present a snapshot of the various ways that some OST providers are currently addressing adolescent literacy development in structured out-of-school time programs. In the next sections, we offer some suggestions for a planful process that will support you in building adolescent literacy programs that draw from these promising practices.

New Directions for Developing Adolescent Literacy Programs in Out-of-School Time

Chapter Summary

This chapter begins with the proposition that although many programs are doing important work that influences literacy and academic development among youth, all programs could benefit from more intentional literacy development programming. We argue that such programming may provide out-of-school time (OST) programs with a planful strategy for influencing student achievement. Based on the promising practices outlined in Chapter 2 and several additional recommendations for advancing adolescent literacy development opportunities in Chapter 3, this chapter outlines eight program areas to consider when bolstering efforts to develop students' reading and writing skills in OST: (a) alignment of program goals and literacy activities, instruction, and professional development; (b) assessment of participants; (c) structured literacy foundations; (d) focus on student engagement and motivation; (e) incorporation of tutoring strategies; (f) provision of one-on-one support; (g) planned transfer opportunities; and (h) program evaluation. The chapter concludes with a list of challenges anticipated in enacting literacy initiatives, taking into consideration the current capacities and unique structural considerations of OST programs serving middle and high school youth.

The Role of Literacy in Advancing Achievement: A Missing Link?

Many of the literacy enhancement and academic enhancement programs interviewed did not identify programmatic goals and objectives around adolescent literacy development *per se*, although most sought to improve their participants' academic success, and particularly in the areas of reading and writing. Indeed, the majority of OST programs resisted association with literacy or tutoring expertise. Even in programs that provide educationally-imbedded projects or homework help time, providers were reticent to delve into the complexities of developing literacy skills across a range of skill levels, citing challenges around staff expertise and capacity issues. However, at the same time, many programs expressed disappointment in their outcomes around student achievement. Well-known results of a recent evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program underscore this point: after two years of participation in 21st CCLC programs, students did not show any greater gains in academic achievement above their control group peers (James-Burdumy et al., 2005).

Intentional efforts to meet the basic, proficient, and advanced literacy development needs of middle and high school students may be a missing link for programs that seek to improve student achievement. Increasingly, OST providers recognize that literacy skill level influences all aspects of academic success, effects students' self-esteem, and shapes future opportunities. Becoming proficient processors of written and oral communication is important for students to prepare for higher education and employment in a post-industrial economy. Intentionality, coupled with a fundamental awareness of students' varying literacy skills and strategies, can ensure that OST programs could become a key partner in preparing students for a future of possibilities.

Practices for Intentionally Advancing Adolescent Literacy Out of School

How might the field of structured out-of-school time programs provide more support to students and schools in advancing literacy skills? In what ways

might these programs become more intentional in their adolescent literacy development activities, while preserving their unique youth development approach? Based on our review of promising practices, research, and evaluation studies, we suggest eight areas to consider for programs that wish to enhance or develop literacy initiatives targeted at adolescents:

1. Alignment of goals, activities, instruction, professional development,
2. Participant assessment,
3. Literacy skill and strategy foundations,
4. Student engagement and motivation,
5. Tutoring strategies,
6. One-on-one support,
7. Transfer opportunities,
8. Program evaluation.

1. Alignment of Goals, Activities, Instruction, and Professional Development

OST providers interested in enhancing their adolescent literacy development activities should first consider where such activities might fit into the programs' overall goals. If the primary purpose of the OST initiative is to increase the academic achievement of participants, then explicit literacy and academic instruction may be essential (see Literacy and Academic Development below). If the OST provider seeks to support the emotional and social development of young people through positive skill-building experiences, then perhaps a more implicit literacy enrichment agenda would be appropriate (see Social Development below).

Once you have determined to what extent literacy development and/or enrichment activities support the intent of your program, then project coordinators and staff may engage in a process of strategic planning around literacy. In Table 2, we provide a brief tabular summary of possible literacy-related objectives organized by the four types of adolescent literacy development programs defined in this guidebook. Each category includes a sample programmatic goal, followed by some examples of corresponding adolescent literacy development (ALD) objectives, instructional activities, and professional development/planning activities that may be appropriate in supporting these goals. Many of the ideas captured in the table refer back to ideas already laid out in previous chapters of the guidebook

2. Participant Assessment

Assessing students' literacy skills is critical to the success of any program that uses texts in activities. Participant assessment allows the program to gain perspective on students' existing literacy skills, carefully tapping into what young people can do, like to do, and want to do in terms of literate activity as they enter the program and as they progress throughout the program. As mentioned in Chapter 1, even those programs who do not strive to *teach* literate skill, but employ various kinds of text as a cornerstone of their activities, should assess the literate skill of their participants. Such assessments allow you to take stock of the demands your activities place on participants and to assess whether the activities risk excluding youth from full participation in the program.

The trick, of course, in assessing student abilities is that assessments are not typically motivating and enjoyable activities (especially for youth who struggle in school). The negative feelings that many youth associate with assessments raise the dilemma of how programs can accurately and routinely assess young people's literacy development without treating them to a steady diet of testing. Our suggestion is to make use of some forms of formal assessment judiciously at starting, mid, and ending points of participation in the program, and to bolster those formal assessments with informal, dynamic assessments throughout program activities.

Literacy assessments can range from standardized test batteries to more informal assessments, such as informal reading inventories, content reading inventories, literacy process interviews, literacy attitude surveys, literacy practice interviews, and portfolios. Despite recent attention to adolescent literacy, however, it remains the case that there are few formal or informal literacy assessments that specifically assess the literacy skills of adolescent readers and writers, using age-appropriate texts. In what follows, we offer a few specific suggestions of age-appropriate literacy assessment materials.

■ **Standardized test batteries.** Although these data can be very valuable for formal evaluation of program success, we strongly discourage the actual administration of such instruments within the program itself, preferring that OST providers rely on data gathered via school settings, where the administration of such formal instruments is

TABLE *No.***2.**	*Aligning Overall Program Goals with Literacy Objectives and Activities*

Program Type	Description & Goals	Literacy Objectives
Literacy and/ or Academic Development	OST programs that provide explicit literacy and academic instruction to youth who are struggling in school, with the goal of improving literacy performance and/or overall academic performance	▪ Help youth achieve grade-level proficiency in reading and writing ▪ Teach youth reading and writing strategies that will enable them to become independent learners in the disciplines ▪ Support classroom curricula through project-based learning opportunities by scaffolding literacy skills required in each task
Literacy Enhancement	OST programs that engage young people in activities that require the use and refinement of literacy skills, including creative and persuasive writing, public speaking, and debate, both to increase the enthusiasm and motivation of young people and to develop critical literacy skills necessary for participation in a democratic society	▪ Engage youth in fun and intriguing project-based reading and writing activities embedded within content that is relevant and meaningful to the participants ▪ Utilize written and oral communication as a tool for students to express themselves creatively and reflect on personal experiences ▪ Provide opportunities for young people to share their writing with a broader audience, reflect on their creative work, use writing to accomplish tasks, and grow as literary artists
Academic Enhancement	OST programs that coordinate activities to support academic skill-building in reading and writing to promote positive attitudes, determination, and self-confidence around learning and academic success through a variety of activities that build academic competencies	▪ Provide a print-rich environment for young people to be exposed to a variety of texts ▪ Engage participants in standards-based educational curricula embedded within educational games, art projects, music, drama, dance and career exploration opportunities ▪ To seek transfer learning opportunities by imbedding classroom curricular objectives within project-based activities.
Social Development	OST programs that support positive youth development, to encourage young people to make positive choices, contribute to the benefit of society and transition successfully to adulthood. Often include literacy-based activities, without literacy instruction or opportunities to practice literacy skills with guidance	▪ Provide opportunities for youth to use their communication skills as an integral part of their youth development experiences ▪ Demonstrate how literate activities are an essential ingredient in pursuing passions in careers such as the theatre arts ▪ Engender a value in academic success by creating opportunities for young people to become proficient in reading and writing

Program Type	Sample Literacy Activities[a]	Planning & Teaching Tasks
Literacy and/ or Academic Development	▪ Individualized and small-group instruction in a range of literacy skills, including word knowledge, vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge, linguistic/textual knowledge, strategy use, and inference-making abilities[b] ▪ Opportunities to read orally and silently for practice (in supportive and rewarding environments) ▪ Opportunities to hear others read ▪ Opportunities to write for practice ▪ Opportunities to read the writing of others ▪ Opportunities to revise writing ▪ Activities designed to help youth locate texts that correspond with their interests (e.g., trips to local libraries, trips to bookstores) ▪ Activities that guide youth in setting purposes for reading, monitoring comprehension, and employing strategies as needed	▪ Intensive and on-going professional development in: • Basic literacy teaching practices, including phonics and phonemic awareness, vocabulary instruction, language analysis, text structure, and comprehension strategies • Working with youth from multiple social and cultural backgrounds • Motivation, interest, and engagement ▪ Analysis of texts to be used in instruction, with a focus on the motivating features and the linguistic and cognitive demands of the texts ▪ Assessment of contexts for instruction, with focus on motivating and potentially de-motivating features ▪ Assessment of participants
Literacy Enhancement	▪ Project-based activities, often for the purposes of community and civic service (e.g., social action projects that require young people to take stands on issues, use data to argue points, and reason through their arguments in formal oral and written texts) ▪ Data gathering (via interviews and surveys) ▪ Information text reading ▪ Debate and dialogue ▪ Persuasive writing (e.g., essays, critiques, and letter writing) ▪ Reviewing, critiquing, and revising oral and written texts	▪ Intensive and on-going professional development in: • Basic literacy teaching practices, including phonics and phonemic awareness, vocabulary instruction, language analysis, text structure, and comprehension strategies • Literacy teaching practices focused on scaffolding student (a) reading of texts specific to particular disciplines or contexts, (b) data gathering and recording techniques, (c) speaking or writing using data, and (d) reviewing, critiquing, and revising oral or written texts • Working with youth from multiple social and cultural backgrounds • Motivation, interest, and engagement ▪ Analysis of texts to be used in instruction, with a focus on the motivating features and the linguistic and cognitive demands of the texts ▪ Assessment of contexts for instruction, with focus on motivating and potentially de-motivating features ▪ Assessment of participants

Program Type	Sample Literacy Activities[a]	Planning & Teaching Tasks
Academic Enhancement	▪ Games ▪ Reading informational texts ▪ Writing essays, research reports, and narratives ▪ Arts-based activities ▪ Project-based learning activities[c] ▪ Field trips ▪ Data collection activities ▪ Community service	▪ Professional development in: • Relationship between academic achievement and literacy skills • Working with youth from multiple social and cultural backgrounds • Motivation, interest, and engagement in reading and writing ▪ Assessment of literate demands of the academic activities ▪ As appropriate, analysis of texts to be used in instruction, with a focus on the motivating features and the linguistic and cognitive demands of the texts ▪ Assessment of contexts for instruction, with focus on motivating and potentially de-motivating features ▪ Assessment of participants, with a focus on literacy skill as necessitated by target program activities (i.e., if program activities are written text intensive, then participants' written literacy skills should be assessed)
Social Development	▪ Games ▪ Reading informational texts ▪ Writing essays, research reports, and narratives ▪ Arts-based activities ▪ Project-based learning activities[c] ▪ Field trips ▪ Data collection activities ▪ Community service	▪ Assessment of literate demands of the social development activities ▪ As necessitated by assessment of literate demands, • Targeted professional development in specific literacy teaching practices (see Categories 1 and 2) • Professional development in motivation, interest, and engagement in reading and writing • Analysis of texts to be used in activities, with a focus on the motivating features and the linguistic and cognitive demands of the texts ▪ Professional development in working with youth from multiple social and cultural backgrounds ▪ Assessment of contexts for instruction, with focus on motivating and potentially de-motivating features

[a] A challenge in developing the necessary and appropriate supports for adolescent literacy in OST programs is that programs can engage in many different activities that may or may not demand literate skill. The activities listed in this table represent just a sample of possible activities that could be used to advance the literacy skills of youth in various types of programs. The lists are not exhaustive.

[b] Instruction should be designed to meet particular needs based on youth assessment

[c] See details in Category 2 for literacy skills demanded of project-based learning activities

routine. If available from schools, OST providers should attempt to gain information from tests administered by the state (whether state-designed tests or nationally prepared tests used at the state level). If it is absolutely necessary for the program to administer a standardized assessment, then we suggest the Gates-McGinitie (GMRT, Riverside Publishing). The GMRT is relatively brief in duration, can be accessed on line, and offers accompanying instructional suggestions based on the assessment results. Many other standardized test batteries are available, however, so a thorough review that assesses program goals and participant needs should be undertaken before making final decisions.

▪ **Informal reading inventories (IRIs).** There are a number of excellent informal literacy assessments that provide educators with information about the

specific nature of readers' and writers' strengths and challenges. As mentioned previously, specificity is especially critical in programs that explicitly seek to develop or re-mediate participants' literacy skills. Such information is also helpful in programs that are not explicitly about literacy development but that recognize their programs as having high literacy demands. Informal reading inventories such as the Qualitative Reading Inventory (Leslie & Caldwell, 2003) provide information on decoding, fluency, and comprehension across many levels. The particular advantage of the QRI is that, unlike many other informal reading inventories, it provides assessments based on upper-level texts of different content areas. A disadvantage of the QRI is that these texts, although purported to be drawn from the content areas, do not represent the best examples of content area texts young people might encounter in or out of school. Nevertheless, the QRI is the best IRI for adolescent literacy purposes.

- **Content reading inventories.** The advantage of a content area reading inventory (CARI) is that it is based on actual content texts that actual young people are expected to read in their content area middle and high school classrooms. Any given educator can construct a CARI simply by choosing a complete section of text and developing questions that require readers to extract information, make inferences, and apply ideas in the text to their own lives. The CARI designer should, of course, attempt to answer her/his own questions before administering to youth participants, both to establish a scoring rubric and to be sure the questions make sense. Then, after informing the youth participants that the inventory is being done to help in program planning—and not to assign grades or individual evaluations—the inventory can be given. To make the CARI a dynamic assessment, the program educator can engage youth participants in brainstorming about the topic before reading, which helps to assess the kinds of knowledge and perspective readers bring to a reading task. The disadvantage of this uniquely individualized assessment is that the OST provider must construct content reading inventories themselves; there are no prepared materials to purchase. Thus, content area reading inventories can be cumbersome to use because they require trained literacy teachers

to know how to choose appropriate texts and to construct reliable and valid questions about the content. However, they are extremely cost effective because they demand only that a program have access to either content area textbooks or to real-world texts that might appropriately be used in content classrooms. More information about how to construct and administer a CARI is available in Readence, Bean, and Baldwin (1989).

- **Literacy process interviews.** Literacy process interviews are designed to assess how readers and writers think about their work as they are engaged in it. The interview questions one designs serve only as a protocol, with specific questions framed for particular reading and writing activities as they occur. The participants' responses are not scored on a scale, but are used to guide program educators as they teach youth different literacy skills and strategies. For example, questions might revolve around what a reader did when encountering an unknown word. Such questions provides the program educator with a valuable insight not only about the type of vocabulary that might challenge adolescent readers in the program, but also about the particular strategies a given reader might know for dealing with unknown or difficult words. An example of a literacy process interview used in the Study of Social and Cultural Influences on Adolescent Literacy Development research program (Moje, 2006) is provided in Appendix D. In addition, Miholic's (1994) reading strategies inventory is a time effective and useful tool for assessing readers' strategies for monitoring their comprehension and making sense of texts.

- **Literacy practices interviews.** Literacy practices interviews can be given individually or in small, focus group-like settings. Literacy practices interviews have the goal of eliciting the different kinds of texts (e.g., print, digital, oral) that youth like to read/write/hear/speak, have read/written/heard/speak, and wish to read/write/hear/speak in the future. Literacy practices interviews, if done in one sitting, can be time consuming, but the beauty of these interviews is that they can be done informally and carved into appropriate time and content units. An example of a literacy practices interviews used in the ALD project (Moje, 2005) is provided in Appendix D.

■ **Portfolios.** We use the idea of portfolios here to represent the notion that one of the best ways of assessing is to collect examples of youth work over time. Portfolios—which can include formal assessments, all of the interview responses listed above, written texts, book lists, art work, and anything else that participants and program educators feel represents participant growth— capture progress and effort in a single piece of writing, as well as development over time. A vast literature on portfolio use in school classrooms and even whole school districts is available on line and portfolios are discussed in virtually every compilation of assessment strategies developed in the 1990s and beyond. Some useful especially useful sources on how to develop literacy portfolio systems of assessment include Tierney, Carter, & Desai (1991) and Tierney et al. (1998).

3. Literacy Skill and Strategy Foundations

The next step for all OST programs interested in advancing adolescent literacy is to build a strong foundation of activities and interactions that value a diverse range of reading, writing, and verbal communication skills. We argue that regardless of whether a program seeks to develop basic literacy skills or to develop youth socially for a world of work and civic engagement, OST programs that are built upon a robust literacy foundation provide the following:

■ **Text-rich environments.** Successful programs seem to offer a diverse range of print and electronic reading materials, including texts that represent a wide array of cultural, racial, ethnic, and class-based experiences. Students also need a quiet, productive space afterschool for studying. Making use of a local public school library may be one opportunity to insure access to texts, computers, and other study tools (and is a good way to open schools to the community). Public libraries are also excellent venues for afterschool work, and many public librarians are eager to bring young people into their facilities. Whatever the location, the key to this principle is that young people have access to multiple text resources, whether "print" materials (i.e., books and magazines printed on paper) or electronic materials.

■ **Project-based curricula.** Rather than engaging in a series of ad-hoc activities, quality programs plan and implement educational enrichment activities that are well designed and aligned with—or at least acknowledge—state educational standards. Most important here, however, is the idea that the activities cohere under an articulated goal or purpose. Research on project-based curricula in schools suggests that the projects be held together with "driving questions" (Blumenfeld et al., 1991) that youth investigate with guidance from a more knowledgeable other (which could be an adult, but could also be another young person who has already carried out a similar investigation). Typically, the features of project-based pedagogy include (a) questions that encompass worthwhile and meaningful content anchored in authentic or real-world problems; (b) investigations and artifact creation that allow students to learn apply concepts, demonstrate their understanding, and receive on-going feedback; (c) collaboration among students, teachers, and others in the community; and (d) use of literacy and technological tools (Cognition, 1992; Krajcik et al., 1998; Mercado, 1992).

■ **Meaningful learning opportunities.** The idea of framing activities in purposeful projects is not new, and many in- and out-of-school time groups consider such work central to providing meaningful learning opportunities for children and youth. What is new, however, is the idea that literacy teaching and learning should be done within the project activities, rather than as separate work. As Robert Halpern (2003a, 2003b) suggests, the literacy teaching practices that have the most traction among children and youth are those that are embedded in meaningful activities. Designing activities as projects with clearly defined goals or driving questions helps to make the literacy learning more meaningful.

■ **Qualified staff members who can respond to student questions and lead without controlling, youth work.** The importance of staff qualifications is one widely recognized by all those who work in OST. It is also, unfortunately, one of the greatest tensions of OST, as programmers face small budgets that are heavily dependent on volunteer staff. That tension acknowledged, we must nevertheless underscore the importance of including lead staff members who understand literacy processes, recognize the different types of

texts that exist and be able to analyze the demands of working with such texts, know the range of literacy skills they might encounter in participants, and are knowledgeable about various strategies for making sense of or producing written texts. These lead staffers can train and model for volunteers. Without at least some expertise among the staff, it is likely that programs will turn to packaged literacy activities that violate the principle of being embedded in meaningful work. Such packaged activities may bear a close resemblance to some of the less-than-engaging school activities that youth are trying to get away from. Finally, packaged activities tend to follow rigid structures and thus violate a well-documented principle of OST programs, that of youth leadership with adult guidance (see Appendix A).

- **Opportunities for youth to draft, share and revise their work.** Developing good writing skills includes the ability to create multiple drafts, incorporate constructive feedback and continuously improve one's work. OST programs should include this process in both literacy development and enhancement activities. Students also enjoy sharing their work with a broader audience, although many are often hesitant at first, given negative associations they may have with past writing experiences. Making writing public can give writing activities a sense of greater purpose. Many OST programs have been successful in offering students opportunities to publish, or share their work at a community event, but may need to work on developing strategies for preparing youth to publicly display their work. Still others need simply to include public sharing and constructive feedback from others as a part of the writing work done in OST.

- **Provide opportunities for students to enhance multiliteracies.** Programs like the Sunset Neighborhood Beacon Center and Citizen Schools offer computer clubs to advance students' skills in information navigation, word processing and graphic design. OST providers should not assume a certain skill level and access to technology among their young participants. Research shows that certain segments of disadvantaged communities still have difficulty in accessing and high-end use of computers and online communication

(Moje, Tysvaer & Morris, 2006). Competency in multiliteracies requires the ability to communicate through various forms of multimedia, to access information online efficiently, and process streams of text. As emphasized in Chapter 1, these skills are essential for succeeding in today's workplace and higher education.

4. Student Engagement and Motivation

For many OST programs, student motivation is at the heart of what they do. Activities are tailored to student interests, youth voluntarily choose projects most intriguing to them, and programs create nonjudgmental climates where intrinsic motivations flourish. However, another group of OST providers, the literacy development programs geared toward failing students, face a difficult motivational dilemma. The providers typically recognize that participants did not choose to attend and have experienced a lifetime of educational struggle, if not outright failure. These motivational challenges are especially prominent among adolescents who struggle to read and write. At the same time, these OST providers face the demand for speedy improvement in adolescent literacy skills—an inarguable need, because the longer youth struggle, the more difficult schools becomes for them and the more likely the chance that they will leave school at age 16. Given the urgency they face to show immediate improvement in school-like tasks, most literacy development programs look and feel school-like. The irony, of course, with this situation, is that the programs offer youth more of the same activities they fail at in school. These remedial or development programs should work earnestly to build on Alvermann's idea that it is the instruction that needs to change ("re-mediating"), rather than the youth and thereby incorporate more meaningful activities that tap student motivation. Literacy development specialists in OST can make such changes by:

- **Changing the mindset that basic skills training must come before other types of literate activities.** According to Halpern (2003a, 2003b), "…the prevailing view in most urban schools is that children have to master basic skills before they can use reading and writing for personal and social purposes… it pushes the task of nurturing motivation to the background" (p. 5). Instead, OST programs can draw from scholars such as Paulo

Freire (1973) and situate basic literacy learning in generative activities; that is, they can offer youth activities and tasks that generate the need to communicate in print, thus producing a reason to learn print. One only needs to turn to studies of youth literacy outside of school and outside of formal programs to find evidence that, when motivated, even struggling readers and writers will persist to read and write texts that matter to them (Alvermann, 2001; Mahiri, 1994; Moje, 2000; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2003).

■ **Replicating promising practices in project-based curricula from the literacy enhancement programs.** There is no need to reinvent the wheel on engaging enrichment activities. See Appendix C for a list of resources on project-based curricula ideas. In addition, OST programs can link to school-based project curricula and taking up where school projects leave off or cannot go. Moje's work in project-based science classrooms in Detroit provides evidence of opportunities to go beyond the scope of the science classroom projects (already 8-10 weeks in length). Detroit teachers report a desire to engage their students in social action projects related to the science concepts under study, with written reports, letters to the editor, and community poster presentations some of the ideas generated. However, the intense demand to move through the curriculum and meet a broad range of standards makes such work difficult in a 50-minute class period. OST could partner with schools to provide opportunities for youth to continue to explore community-based literacy and content learning across a variety of disciplines (Moje et al., 2004).

■ **Partnering with an existing OST literacy enhancement, academic enhancement, or social development program to provide enrichment activities for your participants.** Although OST providers are increasingly building stronger partnerships with schools as suggested above, the programs are sometimes disconnected from other social service and support organizations in their communities. Afterschool programs could benefit a great deal from collaborating to share resources, coordinate student activities, and provide more comprehensive services to families. Children's Aid Society, a New York City nonprofit, has developed a model for positioning the school as a holistic service provider. Children's Aid Society coordinates Community Schools programs in 19 public NYC schools, offering students and their families social

Although OST providers are increasingly building stronger partnerships with schools, the programs are sometimes disconnected from their social service and support organizations in their communities.

services, afterschool programs, summer camps, adult education, health and mental health services. Therefore, Children's Aid Society can address family literacy while providing innovative OST youth programs.

■ **Building on the unique assets and interests of participants. Ask the students for their input on future project-based activities.** Create a youth board of directors that is responsible for gathering student ideas and feedback on program planning. Citizen Schools, highlighted in Chapter 2, provides one of the best examples of the youth leadership philosophy, which is at the core of their program. Young people lead their weekly afterschool meetings, provide input on apprenticeship classes, and practice their leadership skills in community service projects throughout their neighborhoods.

5. Tutoring Strategies

When it comes to helping students with their homework, tutors and staff should be prepared to teach students strategies that will help them become independent learners. An approach similar to the Strategic Tutoring program model highlighted in

Chapter 2 will help insure that broad academic enhancement and development occur through literacy development. This approach recognizes the central role of literacy in making and representing knowledge in the different content areas of middle and secondary schools.

Based on the Strategic Tutoring model (Hock, Deshler & Schumaker, 2000), homework help strategies include a four-phase process:

- **Assessing the student's approach to various literacy tasks and gaining student commitment to enhance learning.** The tutor's goal is to clearly define the skills and strategies necessary to complete current assignments, evaluate whether the student's current strategy is working, and gaining the student's commitment to learn a more efficient and effective strategy. The Assessing Phase is completed when the student and tutor make commitments to learn and teach important strategies.

- **Co-construction of a learning strategy.** Based on student needs and the context of learning (i.e. the particular homework assignment), the tutor works in collaboration with the student to create a simple, logical series of information processing and self-regulation steps to accomplish the task.

- **Teaching strategies.** The Teaching phase contains three critical components. In the first, Modeling, the tutor provides an expert model of the learning strategy and monitoring behaviors by demonstrating how to apply the behaviors to the students' current homework assignment. The main goal during modeling is to model the expert thinking and verbal self-talk associated with using good strategies to complete academic tasks. In the second, Guiding, the tutors provides scaffolded support as the student applies the new strategy to the task at hand. During Guiding, the tutor provides positive and corrective feedback to the student. Finally, the tutor provides continued Support as the student applies the strategies more and more independently. Tutoring and homework help activities include several opportunities to practice and refine the new strategy until the student is adept at completing the assignment.

- **Application to a new task.** Once the student has mastered the strategy for a particular subject area, the next step is transferring that skill to an assignment in another class. Again, the tutor models the strategy and guides the student in practicing the steps repeatedly until the tasks can be performed independently.

For more information on implementing Strategic Tutoring curricula at your site, see Appendix C.

6. One-on-One Support

At least one-quarter of students struggle with basic literacy skills, and the proportion is higher for low-income and minority youth. OST programs serve a significant number of students that need extra support beyond enrichment. Research shows that one-on-one tutoring can help improve at-risk students' reading achievement (Lauer et al., 2006). Therefore, in addition to enrichment activities, OST programs should consider:

- **Assessing the literacy abilities of their participants.** As indicated previously, assessment is a critical aspect of adolescent literacy development. However, some OST programs put the responsibility on students to self-identify if they are struggling with reading or writing. And yet, adolescents with weak or non-standard literacy skills may not have the inclination to seek help or ask questions for a number of reason including the shame and stigma attached to underperformance. In addition, the student may lack more nuanced comprehension skills that are not evident to unskilled practitioners. As Halpern (2003) describes, "Many children develop a kind of pseudo-literacy: They can engage in the mechanics of reading and writing but not enjoy these activities or use them for reflection, exploration, or becoming competent in the disciplines" (p. 6). Discovering the unique literacy assets and challenges of your student population may require both formal and informal assessment tools, as described previously.

- **Providing one-on-one support from professional educators.** OST programs may offer one-on-one tutoring either as an integral part of their program, or through referrals to a literacy instructional opportunity. Some programs recruit certified teachers and/or literacy specialists to provide these services in-house. Other OST providers place trained volunteers as tutors for struggling students. AmeriCorps, Experience Corps, and college students provide volunteer resources in non-school hours. Importantly, one-on-one tutoring should not supplant other engaging activities in the

OST program, but rather complement them and provide another layer of services for young people.

- **Work towards full participation on literacy-related tasks.** Some OST programs, in the interest of full inclusion, provide opportunities for literacy-reluctant participants to opt-out of reading and writing tasks. These youth may choose to fill the role of director or set designer in a theatre arts program, or as illustrator in a comic book exercise. These programs should be commended for their efforts to build upon participants' strengths, increase their motivations around literacy-based activities, and build their self-esteem through meaningful contributions to collaborative tasks. However, this may also be a missed opportunity to identify significant obstacles to academic success. OST providers may consider rotating responsibilities on group projects. Just as a reluctant leader would benefit from playing the director role, a reluctant writer can benefit from struggling through the draft of a script. In both cases, staff should be prepared to provide the necessary scaffolding to help that youth succeed, including one-on-one tutoring support.

7. Transfer Opportunities

Repeatedly, OST providers explained that they avoid activities which mirror traditional classroom instruction models. "If it looks like school, smells like school, they don't want to have anything to do with it," said one program coordinator who serves middle school students. In many programs, this means engaging students in literate activities that do not conform to standard academic texts. Instead of essay writing, students compose poetry or comic books. Rather than focusing on spelling and grammar, OST programs may emphasize student expression and creativity. However, from a research standpoint, it is unclear if non-academic reading and writing activities transfer into school success. As discussed in Chapter 1, the literacy skills that are useful in constructing poetry in a community-based arts program may not be the skills that are necessary to comprehend and synthesize concepts from ninth-grade biology texts or to write eleventh-grade U.S. history research reports. If the OST provider seeks to advance academic achievement, programs may explore ways of making transfer more explicit without losing their uniquely engaging instructional styles. For example,

- **Intentionally Disguised Learning.** Follow "intentionally disguised learning," as one project coordinator described their enrichment, with student reflection opportunities. Perhaps after participants engage in a highly motivating project that uses literate skills, programs can facilitate a student-led discussion on the educative value of the activities. Staff may ask a series of questions which allow students to think meta-cognitively about their work and make connections to classroom competencies. This "disguised" metacognitive work is difficult to do well, however, and relies heavily on highly trained staff. Absent such staff, it may be necessary to make connections more explicit, which can be done through follow-up conversation without needing to make the OST activities themselves school-like. For example, after cooking class, the instructor may lead students in a discussion of how they also use fractions in math.

- **Dovetail afterschool projects with classroom assignments.** As described previously under project-based work, this strategy can work both ways: either by bringing an assignment, such as reading a particular novel, into the afterschool program, or by incorporating an afterschool activity into a class syllabus. For example, the DC Creative Writing Workshop employs both artists-in-residence classroom teachers and afterschool practitioners who can share information, ideas, and lesson planning across the two spaces.

- **Insure that youth experience a diversity of contexts to apply their literacy skills.** With work embedded in many different contexts and done for many purposes, program staff can explicitly talk with youth about transferring strategies across non-school contexts and, ultimately, start to make more pointed and explicit connections to in-school contexts.

8. Program Evaluation

After OST providers have tailored their literacy activities to participants' strengths and challenges according to well-defined programmatic goals, a comprehensive evaluation plan helps to track outcomes and measure success. A strong evaluation plan examines both the process of the literacy intervention (i.e., inputs and the nuances of day-to-day practice), as well as the results (i.e. outputs,

in terms of both data on student achievement and on student and parent satisfaction and motivation). A recent review of evaluation studies of OST programs supporting adolescent literacy development showed that many evaluations focused either on participant gains, or on the more process-oriented participant satisfaction ratings (see Appendix A). Clearly, a more robust and productive evaluation plan would include indicators measuring both process and outcomes.

Carefully assessing students in the ways described above can provide important data for processual evaluations, although it is also critical to include data on how the day-to-day operations of the program work, on how program providers feel about their work, and on the kinds of resources that are routinely available in the program.

In addition, OST providers are being asked increasingly to track student achievement as an outcome of the program. In an *Education Week* article by Granger and Kane (2004) cautions against using achievement test scores as the sole benchmark of success:

> While it is reasonable to expect that after-school activities *can* affect performance as measure by achievement tests, it is likely that such effects will be small. This is particularly true for reading and writing scores, since they are traditionally less responsive than mathematics scores to instruction… We should balance a focus on test scores with an examination of intermediate effects — more parental involvement in school-related activities, more diligent homework completion, more school attendance, and better grades, for example — which may pay off in improved text performance over time.

For a helpful overview of the basic components of quality OST program evaluations, see the Harvard Family Research Project's *Documenting Progress and Demonstrating Results: Evaluating Local Out-of-School Time Programs* (Little, DuPree & Deich, 2002). Although not specifically addressing adolescent literacy development, the publication outlines the logic model framework, which can be used to connect literacy objectives to performance measures and indicators of success.

Based on evaluations of program goals and achievements, as well as the strengths and challenges of your student population, OST providers may begin a planning process to enrich and expand their literacy development activities. Such as process may include:

- **Program Capacity Assessments** — Use an organizational assessment framework that allows the program to evaluate their capacity to improve literacy programming. Access to highly trained staff, print materials, well-organized curricula, computers and digitized multimedia are critical to building strong programs. Although there are no published tools available that are specific to adolescent literacy development in out-of-school time, the Center for Summer Learning provides a helpful, more general self-assessment tool for OST providers, based on effective practice research (see *Making the Most of Summer: A Handbook on Effective Summer Programming and Thematic Learning* in Appendix C). The self-assessment includes dozens of questions for OST provider to consider in supporting a intentional learning environments including staff development, evaluation and sustainability (Fairchild, McLaughlin, & Brady, 2006).

- **Input from Youth** — Be sure to include input from the young people about the content and design of your literacy enrichment activities. Find out the skills, talents, and interests of the youth participating in your program. Establish regular feedback mechanisms, such as student satisfaction surveys and a youth board, to insure that young people have multiple opportunities to guide program planning and implementation. Work to insure that all participants are included in tasks that require literacy skills, which may mean extra support for students who are struggling with reading and writing.

- **Replication of Promising Practices** — Although the field of literacy development in OST lacks scientifically-based research, there exists several evaluative studies which present the best thinking on quality programs to date. Some programs, like The Comic Book Project and Youth Speaks, offer opportunities to become affiliated sites, adopting their programmatic design and curricula. In addition to the programs identified in this guidebook, Appendix B includes a list of organizations that could provide information on promising practices.

- **Partnership Opportunities with other OST Providers** — As demonstrated in this guidebook, there are many different types of literacy development and enrichment activities, meeting a wide range of student needs and ability levels. One program will most likely not have the capacity to address all of the literacy challenges presented by young people participating in the program. Therefore, partnerships with other OST providers can help coordinate services and work towards a more comprehensive approach to literacy development. For example, an academic enrichment program may partner with an afterschool literacy tutoring initiative to serve students with below basic skills.

Out-of-School Time Literacy Development: Summarizing Challenges and Looking Forward

OST programs interested in advancing adolescent literacy will undoubtedly face substantial challenges in implementing any number of changes. First, programs must align their goals with students' needs, a topic which we confront in the sections that follow. Next, OST providers will want to find the right balance between increasing academic enrichment and maintaining a broader youth development agenda. Young people need downtime, too, in the non-school hours, and programs will need to strive for more effective education with minimal intrusion on recreational opportunities.

In addition, implementing a high quality literacy program requires materials, equipment, curriculum, space and staffing. Instructors and tutors should be well trained in adolescent literacy development pedagogy. Activities should be tailored to student needs, which requires accurate assessments of student abilities. Although OST providers have made great strides in building linkages to schools, less collaboration occurs among various OST programs and other potential community partners that could bring additional resources to struggling readers. The OST community also struggles with finding productive ways to involve parents, especially considering the development of older adolescents seeking independence while transitioning towards adulthood.

Finally, more research is needed to determine the most effective strategies for providing meaningful activities that imbed academic learning and transfer to school achievement. The OST field includes dozens of innovative programs that provide positive environments for youth, but are still grappling to find the best ways to meet the complex learning needs of their 21st century participants. A more scientifically-based body of research to complement the plethora of non-experimental evaluation studies would help programs prioritize their time and resources.
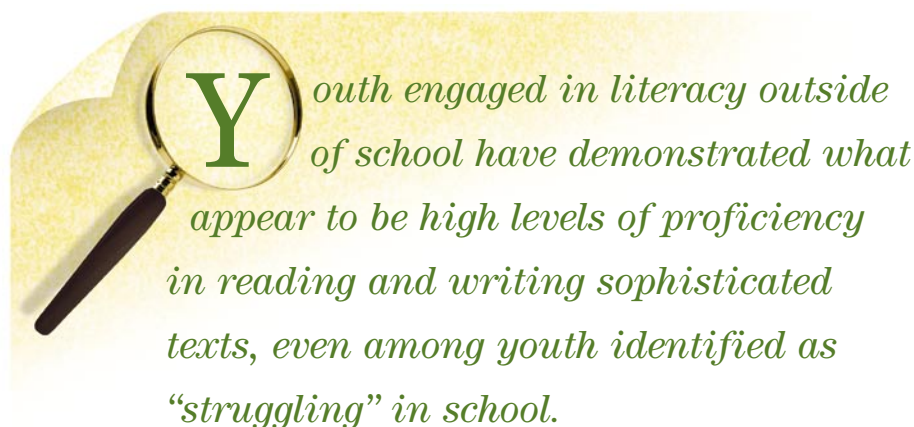
The scan of the school-based adolescent literacy development movement offered here shows critical gaps that can be supported by effective out-of-school time programming. As argued in the Harvard publication, *Afterschool Education*, OST programs "…offer an ideal means of bridging gaps between parents and schools, schools and children, and schools and the wider community in order to overcome the dissociation of children's multiple worlds." Each of the "types" of adolescent readers and writers represented in the above review represents adolescent readers or writers that out-of-school programs currently serve and could serve in terms of literacy development.

That is, out-of-school time programs could seek to remediate reading and writing difficulties that young people face, striving to teach such youth skills they may not have learned at an earlier age, or teaching them to be more proficient with the challenging text demands of middle and high school settings. Other programs may seek to develop already proficient skills as a way of nurturing motivation and passion for reading and writing. Still others may be interested in developing other types of youth skills or knowledge (e.g., drug prevention programs, civic development programs), and may incorporate activities that depend on proficient and advanced literate skill. These programs are of special interest because the requirement of literate proficiency without attention to young people's incoming skill levels and the demands of texts being read or written in the activities may serve to disenfranchise some youth and privilege others. In some cases, OST programs offer participants struggling with reading and writing the opportunity to "opt out" of the literate practice, assigning different roles to these youth that may involve drawing, directing, or other support roles. Although the diversity of opportunities are critical for OST programs creating highly motivating environments, equal concern should be

paid to assuring that youth participate in all aspects of enrichment activities, including reading and writing tasks. Indeed, if the national and international literacy assessments are accurate, youth development programs that engage young people in activities requiring literate proficiency without teaching the necessary skills may be discouraging as much 70 percent of the youth population from participating in their programs. Recognizing the range of literate competencies and motivations youth possess can help out-of-school providers develop programs that serve the range of youth needs and interests.

Youth engaged in literacy outside of school have demonstrated what appear to be high levels of proficiency in reading and writing sophisticated texts, even among youth identified as "struggling" in school.

It is important to note, however, that although NAEP and other testing data suggest that many young people are not mastering the literacy skills necessary for proficient and advanced literacy achievement, a number of adolescent literacy researchers who have studied youth engaged in literacy *outside of school* have observed what appear to be high levels of proficiency in reading and writing sophisticated texts, even among youth identified as "struggling" in school (Alvermann, 2001; Camitta, 1993; Knobel, 1999; Knobel & Lankshear, 2001; Lewis & Fabos, 2005; Moje, 2000a; Moje, 2000b; Morrill, 2000). These studies highlight the complexity of literate activity youth engage in outside of school, demonstrating that many young people are able to make meaning across a variety of symbol systems, including conventional print texts, such as those represented on Internet Instant Messenger (Lewis & Fabos, 2005) or in video and computer games offered in youth programs outside of school (Alvermann et al., 1999; Mahiri, 1994, 1998). In each case, researchers have noted that the youth studied appeared to be highly motivated to engage in and complete the activities under study, even

when the literacy activities appeared to challenge some of their skills. More engaging activities—ones that are meaningful and depend on interesting and engaging texts—may motivate youth to persist, even in the face of reading and writing challenges. (Or, more engaging activities may simply motivate youth to try harder than they do on standardized tests.)

The construct of "motivated literacy" (McCaslin, 1990) then, is important to consider in any attempt to improve literacy skill, and is especially critical in work with adolescents in out-of-school learning time programs, which many youth attend voluntarily. Does the motivation to obtain a particular type of information or to engage in a particular activity in an out-of-school program shape adolescents' abilities to integrate information across texts, relate text meanings to personal experience, employ knowledge from texts to evaluate observations or documents, and compose messages for actual audiences, that is, to engage in the skills deemed important on standardized literacy tests? How could we help youth transfer the literacy skills used in these motivated practices and activities of adolescents' everyday lives from informal contexts and out-of-school programs to school contexts in which academic literacy skills are required? Or do the different social and cultural arrangements of out-of-school programs and schools constrain the transfer of literacy skills from one context to another?

Given the range of issues we have outlined here, we urge OST providers who seek to make a contribution adolescents' literate development outside of school to consider the complexities of the work you're attempting when you launch an adolescent literacy program in OST. To summarize, some of these complexities include (a) the broad age group of youth served under the label of *adolescent*, (b) the broad range of literacy challenges represented among the adolescent populations, (c) the broad definitions of terms such as *literacy* and *text*, and (d) the changing nature of literate practice with the growth in electronic technologies.

On the flip side of the challenges OST providers face, some of the advantages of launching into this area include (a) the broad and growing research base in many areas of adolescent literacy development; (b) the interest and support being given this area by federal and state policy makers, as well as school and community groups; (c) the obvious connections between what many OST programs already do in regard to youth development and current attempts to situate adolescent literacy development within meaningful social, community, and disciplinary projects of study; and (d) youth motivation and interest in OST programs.

Thus, it seems clear that the current climate is ripe for youth development and enhancement programs to include explicit attention to youth *literacy* development and enhancement. However, given the challenges, OST providers need to carefully consider their goals for both youth development and youth literacy development by asking the following questions:

■ What are our goals for youth development in this program? Specifically, are we hoping to develop skills and capacities that youth should have already developed and seemed to lack (i.e., are we about a type of *remediation*?)? Or do we hope to enhance youth skills that are already reasonably well developed? Are we attempting to improve youth outcomes in disciplinary learning, or are we focused more generally on a broad range of skills? Are we trying to teach youth social skills, such as better communication, civic participation, resistance to substance abuse, pregnancy prevention? Do we hope to enhance participants' self-esteem through improved academic performance?

■ What are our goals for youth literacy development in this program? Specifically, what types of youth literacy challenges do we hope to address? Do we hope to remediate literacy skills that should have previously been learned, such as decoding, encoding, and basic vocabulary knowledge? Or do we hope to help youth comprehend and compose the challenging texts of the upper-level disciplines? Are we interested in comprehension, but not necessarily in discipline-specific ways? Or even more generally, are we hoping to increase participants' enthusiasm and excitement around reading and writing? Are we interested in teaching literacy skills for use in everyday society or for

civic participation? Do we hope to teach youth critical literacy skills to enable them to make sense of the vast amounts of unedited information available through electronic sources? Although none of these areas is mutually exclusive and each of these skills is related to the others, carefully assessing the program's immediate goals will shape the program's choice of text materials, teaching packages, hardware and software resources, youth participation structures, assessment strategies, and staffing decisions.

Finally, OST providers, having decided on their particular goals for youth development and youth literacy development should then ask themselves difficult questions about whether the main activities of their programs demand skills that their participants possess. When a program consists of activities that depend on high-level literacy tasks, a vast majority of youth may be inadvertently excluded from participation in those programs. If, for example, OST providers determine that your goals revolve around civic participation and they hope to enhance basic level literacy skills to enable youth to participate in political decision making, then you must develop scaffolded tasks to support youth who may not have mastered the basic literacy skills necessary to participate in the kinds of communication, research, and representation tasks necessary for critical civic engagement.

On the other hand, if the out-of-school research in adolescent literacy is correct, literacy struggle among adolescents may be as much a matter of motivating contexts and texts as is it a matter of literacy skill (Moje, 2006). Given that possibility, it is worth considering how OST providers interested in activities that may require high levels of literacy might actively recruit and support youth whose standardized testing profiles do not demonstrate literacy beyond basic levels. Those youth may be the very youth for whom we can make the greatest literacy difference in out-of-school time.

A Critical Review of Out-of-School Programs for Adolescent Literacy Development

Since the advent of federal legislation such as No Child Left Behind and Reading First titles of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), increasing attention has been paid to children's literacy learning both in and out of school. During the last five years, there has also been greater attention paid to the *secondary* aspect of the ESEA, that is, to the literacy learning needs of *adolescents*. Prior to the new millennium, adolescent literacy learning and development was not a topic of particularly great concern. In 2002, however, the National Institute of Children's Health and Human Development (NICHD) launched a radical new research agenda focused on adolescent literacy. In its call for research proposals the NICHD (and its funding partners, the Office of Vocational Education and the Office of Special Education Research and Services) called for attention to all contexts of adolescent literacy development, including formal, school contexts; formal, non-school contexts; and informal learning contexts, such as homes, churches, and peer groups. Concurrently, there has been increasing interest in the role that out-of-school learning time programs (e.g., afterschool, community-based, and summer programs) might play in supporting young people's academic literacy development.

This review examines out-of-school youth development programs focused on adolescents, and when we could find them, specifically on adolescent literacy development. We are interested in documenting the nature, features, and effects of strong out-of-school youth literacy development programs. We also discuss the role of out-of-school literacy programs in relation to formal schooling.

Background on the Project

As the Carnegie Corporation articulated in its *Reading Next* report, adolescent literacy learning occurs both in and out of schools in formal after-school and community contexts, as well as in homes and peer groups (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). As a result of growing interest in how to support adolescent literacy learning and use beyond the confines of the school day, the Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy formed a sub-committee to study the impact of out-of-school (i.e., after-school, summer school, and community-based) literacy programs. The sub-committee, comprised of Elizabeth Birr Moje and Jacquelynne Eccles (and assisted by Nicole Zarrett and Ritu Radhakrishnan) reviewed the existing literature on out-of-school programs with the following specific questions in mind:

1. What do existing out-of-school programs offer in the way of literacy instruction?
   a. What kinds of programs offer explicit literacy instruction to adolescents, and what is the nature of that instruction?
   b. What are the effects on academic literacy development of the programs that do offer explicit literacy instruction to adolescents?
   c. What other kinds of programs exist and how, if at all, do those programs incorporate reading and writing into their youth development activities?
   d. What are the effects on academic literacy development of programs that offer implicit literacy instruction (i.e., literacy-based activities that provide opportunities for reading and writing engagement)?
2. Based on these findings, what are the features of successful adolescent literacy out-of-school programs?
   a. What should the qualifications be for staff teaching literacy in an after-school program?

b. What should the role of parents and peers be in supporting adolescents with comprehension difficulties?

3. What would it take to replicate good school-based literacy practice in out-of-school settings without losing the unique motivational features of existing programs? What would it take to enact good adolescent literacy practice from out-of-school programs in school settings? Is it appropriate to attempt to integrate practices from the two different learning contexts?

The final set of questions is prompted by both the increasing demand that out-of-school learning programs take up more academic programming and the resistance that many out-of-school program staff voice to reframing afterschool and community-based programs as school-like spaces. Consider, for example, the seemingly opposed stances represented in the two following quotes:

Children's needs are best addressed when formal school-day curricula and "informal" supports such as afterschool programs and other productive learning opportunities are coordinated…. Parallel systems of supplementary education can enhance school-day learning (Gordon et al., 2004).

There is the clear danger that if afterschool programs are pulled into the orbit of schools, they will lose the opportunity to forge their own distinctive goals for children's literacy development. Moreover, children appear to want and need boundaries between different types of experiences (Sutton-Smith, 1997; Heath, 2001). Our observations suggest that children instinctively understand and value the differences in reading and writing in school and outside it. Afterschool programs surely need help gaining access to the specialized knowledge and experiences about literacy development in the educational literature. But they themselves will still be responsible for forging a literacy-related identity that makes sense given their distinctive qualities (Halpern, 2003b).

Thus, a central concern in our review was to examine the differences between school literacy programs and out-of-school time programs, focusing on contextual and structural differences between the two. We sought to examine, in particular, how after-school and community-based programs differ structurally from school settings, and we theorize how such structural differences might shape adolescents'

motivations to engage in literate tasks in the programs. For example, we examined whether the different content area emphases typically represented in schooling (i.e., science, social studies, mathematics, and English language arts) are represented in after-school and community programs and, if so, to what depth various disciplinary concepts are explored.

Moje and colleagues (O'Brien et al., 2001; O'Brien et al., 1995) have theorized that literacy practices are difficult to integrate into secondary school settings because the structure of secondary schools, divided as they are into discrete content areas with unique values and practices, presents challenges of chipping away at well-instantiated belief systems about the role of literacy (or lack thereof) within the content areas. Moreover, it is important to assess whether out-of-school time programs focus their efforts in literacy learning on only certain types of texts (e.g., narrative rather than expository), certain kinds of literacy skills (e.g., decoding and fluency, rather than comprehension), or certain content or topical areas (e.g., social studies rather than science).

We also sought information about the management aspects of school and out-of-school time programs. Eccles and colleagues, for example, have demonstrated that the structures of middle school settings actually work at odds with the developmental needs of early adolescents (Eccles et al., 1991; Eccles & Midgley, 1989; Eccles et al., 1993a; Eccles et al., 1993b). In addition, Stipek (1992) argues that school contexts are less welcoming as children move from elementary to secondary school settings. Others have documented the lock-downs, lack of recreational time, and hall sweeps of middle and high school settings (Moje, 2001).

In addition, Moje's research with adolescents outside of school indicates that their literacy practices in informal networks, while often closely related to the kinds of skills and practices required in school, do not transfer easily to school content-area settings because neither students appear to regard their skills and practices as inappropriate for school learning and teachers appear not to be aware of or to consider inappropriate the skills that young people bring with them into schools (Moje et al., 2004a; Moje et al., 2000). Thus, it is important to examine similarities and differences in the ways school settings and after-school/community settings for learning literacy

are structured in order to assess the likelihood that practices will transfer. Specifically, we raise the question of whether and under what conditions formal out-of-school literacy and other youth development programs can serve as a bridge between literacy skills learned in informal, out-of-school settings and formal secondary school structures.

To conduct the review, we engaged in library and web-based searching. We did not engage in any empirical data collection of our own (i.e., assessments, surveys, interviews, or observations), but we relied heavily on reports from others. For example, Robert Halpern and colleagues (Halpern, 1990, 2003a; Halpern et al., 1999) conducted an extensive survey and observational study of afterschool programs (albeit focused primarily on children's programs, only some of which included middle-school-aged youth. Other such reports came primarily from individual researchers—often graduate students conducting doctoral dissertations—reporting on individual programs. In addition, we examined several large-scale reports, such as the MDRC's evaluation of out-of-school programs and the Afterschool Alliance's report. Private foundations provided another source for program evaluations or reports, although these could not always be considered completely independent reports, as the foundations provided funding to many of the programs reviewed. Finally, we examined brochures and websites to gain both a sense of the range of programs in existence and information about the nature of programming. These materials, obviously, only indicate *plans* for programming and do not provide information on what actually happened within a given program or on outcomes measured.

Existing Out-of-School Programs and Their Effects

One of the most important findings of our review is that although many children and youth out-of-school development program exist (see attached matrix for an extensive, although certainly not exhaustive, summary of available programs), we located very few programs that explicitly provide literacy *instruction* for adolescents, and even fewer that explicitly target the literacy learning of adolescents in grades 9-12. More important, what it means to teach literacy *explicitly* differs in important ways across the programs, with

some programs offering direct instruction in reading or writing skills (although such programs are few and far between) and others engaging youth in literacy-based activities and then embedding literacy instruction in the process, and some simply offering homework help or tutoring. (This differs from those groups who simply engaged youth in literacy-based activities, but did not engage in formal literacy instruction, to be reviewed separately.)

Finally, although several programs targeted at middle-school youth (always in conjunction with elementary-school-aged youth) evaluated development at program enrollment and at points during and after program participation, only one of the programs aimed at older adolescents did so in any formal way. Most evaluations focused on youth feelings about and experiences with the program. Although important data are obtained from such evaluations, these measures do not provide information on how often and to what depth the programs increased youths' skill level or strategic literacy knowledge. Moreover, only a very small number of programs were evaluated quasi-experimentally.

In what follows, we review this variety of programs in the following section by presenting two-three exemplars of each. Reviewing each and every program in existence is beyond the scope of the chapter, but the matrix in the appendix does provide a brief summary of the variety of programs we unearthed. When we talk about a program offering explicit literacy instruction, we refer to instruction that intends to develop at least some of the skills, texts, and contexts necessary for comprehending permanently encoded communicative texts. Those target skills in a reader include the ability to recognize words (both phonemic and morphological awareness), vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge, linguistic and textual knowledge, the ability to infer meanings, the ability to use strategies to make sense when comprehension is challenged, and motivation and interest to engage with a given text. The *context* that shapes a reader's meaning making can include the academic content area in which one is reading (e.g., science), one's ethnic background, the social situation in which one is reading, a broad political context, a family situation, the purpose for one's reading, and even environmental factors such as temperature or noise around a person when she reads. Finally,

the text contributes to the reading process because texts are written in a variety of ways. Texts can tell stories (i.e., narrative) or explain information (i.e., exposition). Texts can pose problems to be solved, or can lecture readers on the right ways to solve problems. Texts can be written in many different styles, relying heavily on technical language and particular ways of phrasing ideas, or they can be written to appeal to more general audiences.

Programs that explicitly target some aspect of each these reader, context, and text features are programs that *explicitly* offer literacy instruction. By contrast, we considered those programs that embedded other concerns in text-based activities or that offered homework help or one-on-one tutoring related to class work (but not necessarily literacy skill development) *implicit* literacy programs. Those programs that targeted other youth development concerns (e.g., teen pregnancy, violence), we labeled youth development programs.

Formal Non-School Institutions for Literacy Learning

Explicit literacy instruction. As stated in the previous section, the majority of programs that offered literacy instruction (separate from homework help and explicitly labeled *literacy instruction*) targeted younger children, with the emphasis usually on *early elementary*-aged children (K through 4th grade). Although we were able to locate many K-8 programs that focused on some aspect of literacy development, we found only six literacy programs dedicated to older adolescents (8th grade and beyond). The dearth of programs dedicated solely to older youth is significant because even if the K-8 programs were expanded to include youth through 12th-grade, it is the rare 16-year-old struggling reader who would be motivated to attend a literacy program with ten-year-olds. It should be noted that many older adolescent out-of-school programs exist, but they do not focus on literacy; instead they focus on violence, drug prevention, teen pregnancy prevention, and other social developmental issues (i.e, they would be considered *youth development*, rather than youth literacy, programs).

One notable exception to the pattern of older youth programs focusing on social concerns rather than literacy is the Comic Book Project, a New York City program which began with fourth through

eighth-grade youth. Because of its success has been currently made available to youth through the high school years (although evaluation data are only available for grades five to eight). The project develops or reinforces youths' literacy skills through the development of original comic books. Staff members lead participants through the writing process, including brainstorming, outlining, designing, sketching, and, ultimately writing (publishing) their comic books. The young people work as individuals or in team. The program serves academically low-performing youth (over 50 percent are learning English). According to Bitz (2004), independent evaluators assessed youths' work in accordance with the New York standards in English Language Arts and found that student writing had improved across skills such as ability to focus, develop a theme, organize and communicate ideas, and write in a unique style and voice. Bitz noted, however, that the ways in which these standards were achieved by the young authors might not be considered conventional, and thus might not translate to school-based achievement (i.e., were the results evaluated as part of school assessments, the youths' writing might not have been rated as highly as it was when embedded in an afterschool project).

Another program, sponsored by the AfterSchool Corporation (TASC), employs multiple projects, some of which targeted "hands-on" literacy instruction. One project, for example, included the reading and enacting of dramatic plays. Typically, however, TASC employs one-on-one teaching that utilizes explicit instruction geared toward each youth's strengths and weaknesses. Instruction reinforces concepts taught in school, but uses a variety approaches to teaching students various literacy skills as a way of sustaining interest. In addition, this program reported increased parent involvement as well as high investment by principals of district schools, which may have contributed to the gains it has demonstrated over several years in quasi-experimental studies comparing matched pairs of participants/non-participants.

For example, in 1997-98, participating youth scored higher in language assessment battery than non-participants, students in grades three to eight who participated three or more days per week improved their scores on citywide standardized tests more

than did non-participants of the same age groups. In addition, a higher percentage of participating youth in grades 9-12 passed their English New York Regents exam than non-participating youth, although this finding is mitigated by the fact that there were significant differences found between those two groups in Regents pass rates *prior* to entering TASC. TASC evaluators go on to say, however, that high school attendance rates were higher among TASC participants than non-participants, which is central to maintaining the high achievement necessary for post-secondary success. In the most recent TASC evaluations, although participants continue to show greater gains than non-participants in mathematics, they do no show across-the-board gains in English. Various reports indicate that specific programs appear to have done a better job than others in supporting English language arts achievement, suggesting that more qualitative research is necessary to explain these limited quantitative findings. In general, school administrators, parents, and youth appear to find TASC a rich and compelling afterschool program, but its academic literacy results are mixed (Reisner et al., 2004).

A third program—Voyager Summer Program—is worth featuring because of its results, which were obtained through mixed methods (quasi-experiments and non-experiments using reading assessments, surveys, and questionnaires) (Roberts, 2000). The program, however, is available only to children and youth in kindergarten through eighth grade, so it can be said to serve only early adolescents. Voyager, targeted at academically struggling youth, offers a four-week summer program that situates literacy learning in an adventure program. Although literacy instruction is embedded in other adventure activities, the program is distinct from other programs that engage youth in text-based activities, but do not teach literacy skills (to be reviewed in a later section). Voyager, by contrast, designed specific reading interventions for different age groups within the program. Independent evaluation (Roberts, 2000) demonstrated that the program had a high satisfaction rate (92 percent of youth liked the teamwork involved and 95 percent liked the different learning "stations" they were exposed to through the program). Similarly, parents felt that the program was a valuable experience for their children.

Academically, in the experimental design, average pre/post-test effect sizes on gain scores of general tests were in the moderate range (.26-.55, depending on unit of involvement), with highest scores for ability to scan text (.45) and lowest for comprehension (.29), although comprehension scores still demonstrate a reasonable effect size. Roberts (2000), however, points out that effect sizes ranged widely across sites, from a low of .05 at one site to .97 at another site, again, begging the question of specific attention to any unique demographic or contextual features of different sites, with particular attention paid to qualitative differences in the nature of instruction or program leader/teacher expertise. In general, however, the program showed impressive gains across youth assessed.

Outcomes from the non-experimental design also indicate significant improvements in general reading ability and sub-components across 3,261 matched pairs in New York and 6,573 matched pairs in Washington, DC. The average New York effect size for reading was .29, whereas the average effect sizes for Washington, DC youth ranged from .26-.43, depending on the particular curriculum and corresponding assessment given. It should be noted, however, that in the second samples (NY and DC) only youth in grades one to six were assessed. It should also be noted that very little information is provided in the report about the specific nature of the program curricula, making it difficult to trace the features of the program and *why* these programs seem to work. Roberts does note, however, that those youth who attended more regularly had higher gain scores, a finding noted across most of the program evaluations we reviewed (Afterschool Alliance, 2004; Halpern, 2003b).

A hallmark of the Comic Book Project, TASC, and Voyager is that they created environments where youth engaged in literacy learning within meaningful and purposeful activities (beyond, for example, homework help). In the Comic Book Project, youth learn to value, critique, and produce different types of texts and, as a result, boundaries between official and unofficial texts are blurred in order to create meaning and to sustain interest in literacy activities. In TASC, youth are engaged in various projects that demand literate practice. In Voyager, youth explore (go on "adventures") different regions and concepts as they learn associated vocabulary and read relevant texts.

An emphasis on non-traditional texts and on constructing meaning or linking to everyday activity was a dominant theme among the explicit literacy projects focused on older adolescents. In addition to the projects described above, other unique explicit literacy projects that involved middle-school-aged and older adolescents are described in *Afterschool Matters* special issue on "Literacies in Afterschool Programs" (Spring 2005). These largely independent projects included The Attic's LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Queer) youth story time project, in which 12-23 year olds read literature and poetry together; The Education Alliance's, Art of Making Comics program for middle and high-school aged youth, the Fabulous Fashions project of M.S. 127 Champions Academy Sports & Arts Club, which targeted young women in the fifth through eighth grades; the 4-H Young Entrepreneurs Garden Program that engaged 11-15 year-olds in gardening, science, and literacy projects; and an independently sponsored afterschool reading and writing workshop for African American, sixth through eleventh-grade girls, focused on "doing hair."

Each of these projects sought to embed literacy learning (usually either reading books and magazines together or producing some type of writing as a result of engagement in an activity) in meaningful, real-world activity or experiences. By contrast, programs focused on early childhood/elementary literacy development emphasized reading skills such as decoding, phonemic awareness and reading comprehension. This striking difference—noted across all the explicit literacy programs designed for adolescents—illustrates three important and related assumptions held by youth development workers. One is that few youth will read or write for the sake of reading or writing (Edwards, 2005). A second assumption is that youth choose whether they wish to attend out-of-school learning time activities, whereas children attend at the will of their parents or other adults. The third is that youth are deeply invested in activities that may involve, or even demand, reading and writing, and that because few youth read or write as an activity unto itself and they can choose whether or not to attend programs, literacy skill instruction must be embedded in those meaningful activities.

Unfortunately, many of the smaller programs and independent projects we tracked do not engage in rigorous formal evaluation of student learning. Many of the projects do engage in rigorous formal evaluation of youth attitudes toward the project (Blackburn, 1999; Edwards, 2005; Rahm, 1998), but they do not document whether youths' literacy skills or strategic reading and writing abilities develop over time in the project. It is especially ironic that the nature of these programs is richly described in the absence of learning gains, because the reverse was true for large-scale assessments of far-reaching programs. If more programs could include pre/post evaluation on what students learn, accompanied by how the feel about learning it in particular ways and detailed information about what actually happened in each site, then out-of-school adolescent literacy programmers would have a far better understanding of why and how particular aspects of programs do or do not work.

In sum, more research is required to assess the impact of each of these programs on students' academic literacy development. And that research needs to employ a mixed-methods design.

Explicit literacy support. In addition to the very few programs designed explicitly to foster adolescent literacy development, many broad-based community programs that focused more generally on positive youth development offered homework help and one-on-one literacy tutoring. In fact, several reviewers of out-of-school learning time programs have noted that even among programs identified as "literacy programs," the dominant activities are homework help and one-on-one tutoring (e.g., Afterschool Alliance, 2004; Halpern, 2003b). These homework help programs are worth noting in particular because a recent meta-analysis of the effects of OST programs on "at-risk students"demonstrated that only homework help program yielded significant gains in student achievement (Lauer et al., 2006).

For example, Los Angeles's Better Educated Students for Tomorrow (BEST) program provides homework help (and demonstrated some positive gain scores on students' reading achievement). To augment the homework support feature of LA's Best, programmers have added the Literacy Loop, an after-school tutoring program, as one of their activities. The Literacy Loop is a cross-age tutoring program that pairs LA's BEST students with high school age tutors to complement the Open Court phonics program used by Los Angeles Unified School District.

Thus, Literacy Loop is tightly connected to the regular school curriculum. Another activity offered is KidzLit, a literacy program developed specifically for use in afterschool programs and designed to foster a love of reading by immersing youth in activities related to a collection of 120 books and companion guides offered for independent reading or in read-alouds. LA's Best also offers a host of other activities that also engage youth in reading and writing, although these are not necessarily explicit literacy instruction or support activities.

Independent evaluation data of LA Best's youth participant outcomes do not clarify which youth participated in which programs and thus cannot track whether particular activities produced their findings. In general, however, on a large-scale assessment of BEST participants (n = 4,000) and non-participants (n = 15,000), BEST participants demonstrated higher scores over non-participants in three important areas: (a) school attendance; (b) reading/language arts and mathematics achievement; and (c) language redesignation to English proficiency (Huang et al., 2000). Using path analysis, the evaluators demonstrated a specific correlation between BEST program attendance levels, higher school attendance, and higher achievement levels among BEST participants. However, the evaluators acknowledge that their findings are conducted in the absence of data about corresponding school programs. Thus, claims about the program's effectiveness need to be considered with some caution. That said, overall, LA's BEST homework and tutoring programs seem to have a positive effect on children. Unfortunately, LA's BEST is offered to elementary school-aged children, so its effects are limited to very young adolescents (grades four to six).

By contrast, the Summer Training and Education Program (STEP) provided 13-15-year-old youth with academic remediation, part-time summer work, life skills training, and homework and tutoring support during the school year. The goals of the program were to minimize summer learning loss, prevent pregnancy, and decrease dropout rates. Local school district provided the curriculum and teaching methods and computer-assisted instruction focused on reading and math skills and higher order thinking. STEP demonstrated a positive impact in the short term by producing higher reading and math grades and test scores on knowledge of responsible social and sexual behavior. In contrast to LA's BEST, however, STEP demonstrated no lasting effects on the participants two-three years after the program in educational, employment, welfare participation or reproductive behaviors (Afterschool Alliance, 2004).

The Quantum Opportunities Program, however, focused specifically on youth 13-18 years old and provided 250 hours of homework help, tutoring, and computer-assisted instruction, together with 250 hours of youth development activities and community service activities over a four-year period. Quantum's evaluations followed a quasi-experimental design and demonstrated significant differences pre/post and from participants to non-participants after two years in the program. In contrast to the STEP program, these effects appeared to last, yielding such results as 63 percent of QOP members graduating high school compared to 42 percent of the counterfactual group, and 42 percent of the QOP members going on to post-secondary education, compared to 16 percent of the counterfactual. QOP demonstrated significantly lower school dropout rates (23 percent QOP dropped out, compared to 50 percent of the non-QOP group) and significantly higher achievement award rates (QOP: 34 percent; non-QOP: 12 percent) (Maxfield et al., 2003).

These contrasting findings of three homework/tutoring programs suggest several hypotheses to be examined further in out-of-school adolescent literacy research. First, long-term participation seems to be clear indicator of greater and longer lasting academic effects (compare TASC and QOP to STEP). In addition, within long-term homework help and tutoring programs, it also seems clear that higher levels of participation matter. Both of these hypotheses are reasonable when one considers that homework help and tutoring programs by their nature make participants dependent on participation, rather than teaching them independent skills for achievement outside of the program. Second, a focus on generalized homework and tutoring support may benefit younger children and early adolescents (TASC results) more than they do older adolescents (STEP). Older adolescents may need specific and meaningful literacy activities that maintain or build high motivation to continue participating in the program and to read and write when present.

In addition, drawing from our work in the advanced subject matters of secondary schools (e.g., Moje, 1996, 1997; Moje et al., 2004), we argue that homework help at the upper-grade levels will produce only limited results, as subject matter texts become increasingly difficult to read due to increased length, technology vocabulary, and abstract target concepts of more advanced content. Moreover, the content areas, as discussed previously, represent unique disciplinary discourse communities, in which young learners need to be apprenticed to unique practices of science, history, mathematics, and literary critique. Disciplinary literacy theory (Hicks, 1995/1996; Lee, 2001; Moje et al., 2004a, 2004b) argues that advanced disciplinary literacy skills develop in practice-rich contexts with experts guiding novices. We concur with Halpern (2003b), who suggests that few youth development workers in homework help programs and (other youth development programs) possess the disciplinary expertise to apprentice youth to disciplinary language and research practices. What's more, homework help and tutoring programs cannot provide the material resources (e.g., laboratory settings) necessary for such apprenticeships to blossom. The Quantum Opportunities Program, of course, suggests a different picture because many of its participants graduated high school, but data indicate that grades and achievement scores were not dramatically improved (Maxfield et al., 2003) and there is little evidence of the nature of the high school course work participants engaged in; data demonstrate only that participants obtained high school diplomas and some went on to post-secondary institutions.

Finally, one finding from STEP suggests a possible hypothesis about the importance of focus in homework help/tutoring programs. One goal of STEP was to decrease teen pregnancies; notably, although reading and math achievement effects dropped off after two years, one lasting effect was documented: knowledge of sexual reproductive behavior, a finding that suggests the STEP program's focus was dominated by its commitment to reducing teen pregnancies. Thus, it can be hypothesized that homework help and tutoring programs that focus particularly on reading—and particularly on subject matter reading for older adolescents—might have the longest lasting gains of homework help/

tutoring programs. It should be noted, across the board, however, that all the achievement effects we documented in such programs (whether TASC, QOP, or the myriad other homework/tutoring programs) were tied to the participants' continued presence in the program. As long as participants attended, they achieved. This point is underscored by the fact that in most cases the existing programs appeared to focus on immediate measures of improvement (grades and achievement scores), rather than on long-term mastery of life skills (which is, of course, harder to document, suggesting the need not only for mixed methods designs, but also long-term, longitudinal designs). In fact, we found no data that examined youths' achievement three to four years beyond their time in the program.

Engagement in youth development and/ or literacy-related activities. Because very few programs exist for the explicit teaching of literacy to adolescents (especially older adolescents), we also examined youth programs that engaged young people in literacy-based activities and may have implicitly taught or developed literacy skills. Many such programs presented opportunities for youth to learn or develop literacy skills, but we could find little to no evidence that the skills were explicitly taught in the process. For example, Atlantic Public Schools' Duty to the Community required youth to devote 75 hours of unpaid voluntary service to their communities during the high school years. At end of program were instructed to write an essay about these experiences. Another youth development program, YouthNET, serves inner-city middle school youth (ages 11–14) in Waterbury, Connecticut. YouthNET programs consist of a range of afterschool activities including music, drama, computer instruction, and homework help. Activities are offered in four- to eight-week program offerings, such as computers, cooking, outdoor adventure, and basketball. In its fourth year, the program activities were expanded to offer a Caribbean cultural experience, including instruction in steel pan drumming. Heads on Fire is a San Diego-based program that claims to engage youth in digital literacy projects aimed at revealing oppressive practices and working toward social justice.

Each of these exemplar programs represent a variation of the many youth development programs in which young people are or could be engaged

in reading and writing activities that support their positive social and academic literacy development.

In fact, such programs abound, raising the question of whether the youth who attend these programs come in with reasonably well-developed literacy skills, which are simply enhanced, or whether poorly developed skills that are seen as weaknesses or overlooked in typical school settings are scaffolded and/or remediated implicitly through these unique contexts (see Halpern, 2003a, 2003b). For example, book discussion groups such as those represented in Alvermann et al. (1999) portray adolescents coming together in libraries to read and discuss books. The book discussions were not established to teach reading skills, per se, and yet the young people's reading and analysis of texts were fostered in these practices. Alvermann *et al.* note, however, that not all of the youth involved were considered strong students in school, which suggests that the context may have motivated them enough to exert the effort to remain in the book discussions and other activities. Similarly, Mahiri (1994, 1998) demonstrated extensive engagement in reading and writing related to sporting activities and to computer game playing at youth centers he studied, even among youth who struggled in school. The question remains, however, whether these young people progressed in their literacy skill development and whether any skills that may have been enhanced transferred to academic domains.

These findings suggest the need for youth development programs that employ literacy-related activities to assess youth literacy proficiency at various points throughout its program. Such measures would have enormous implications for the relationship between youth out-of-school learning time programs and school-based literacy instruction. If, indeed, many youth who participate in such programs are able to engage actively and with motivation in literacy-based activities despite poorly developed literacy skills and without explicit instruction, and if those same youth actually show increases in literacy skill development as a result of their participation, then schools would have much to learn from how the programs were structured and run. Such studies would, of necessity, require mixed methods designs that document both gains in youth literacy learning and the processes and contexts by which those gains were obtained.

Informal Non-School Settings for Literacy Learning

Although literacy learning outside of school can be formally structured, a number of youth also engage in informal family, peer, and community practices that provide opportunities to learn or practice literacy skills that may have a beneficial impact on their academic literacy performance. To review the many ways that families, peers, and non-formal community groups contribute to adolescent literacy development is beyond the scope of this paper, and yet these important resources should not be ignored. Moll and colleagues (Moll, 1994; Moll *e*t al., 1989) document the "funds of knowledge" available in Mexican origin communities in the southwest. Orellana (2000) analyzed what she labeled the "para-phrasing" practices of bilingual children who co-constructed meanings of texts with their Spanish dominant parents in the process of translating for them. Rogers (2002) studied family literacy practices that support both academic literacy development and the empowerment of impoverished youth in school settings. Finally, Moje (2000a) documented, the words of one youth, "all the stories that we have," stories and texts that emanate from families and peer groups and could be used to promote literacy development. In a separate study, Moje et al. (2004) documented over six years of ethnographic analyses in one Detroit community the many ways that family experiences could contribute to academic literacy development.

The import of such findings for both school-based and out-of-school time programs is clear, but is particularly evident when one considers an important finding of many out-of-school time programs: Parent and community connections and involvement in programs was beneficial (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). It may also be the case that parents could feel more welcome in out-of-school time programs than they would in school settings, making out-of-school time settings the ideal place to build academic literacy partnerships with parents, thus drawing from important funds of knowledge they bring to their children's lives.

Most important for the purpose of advancing literacy learning among adolescents, it is critical to recognize that their lives are rich and full, that they bring a wealth of knowledge, experience, and interest

to both school and out-of-school programs, and that studies that document such knowledge can be helpful to planning captivating and motivating programs that will encourage youth participation in out-of-school literacy programming, a uniformly agreed-upon key ingredient for improving academic literacy achievement.

What are the Features of Successful Literacy Programs for Adolescents?

Conclusions and Implications

The number of programs in existence is both a strength and weakness in surveying the landscape of out-of-school adolescent literacy and youth development programs: At one level, there are many opportunities to engage youth in rich activity outside of school. However, there are also so many different programs that it is difficult to conduct a deeply thoughtful assessment of what they accomplish. At the same time, the value of local programs that target the specific needs of particular youth should not be diminished. In fact, it is hard to imagine only large-scale, generalized programs working effectively.

In terms of evaluation, the greatest weakness of afterschool adolescent literacy programming, beyond the fact that so few explicitly target literacy instruction for older youth, lies in the unevenness of evaluation methods. Programs that appear to have done a good job of measuring outcomes or gains take at best a cursory approach to examining—or even describing—the nature of the programs. In other words, we might know that a particular program produces gains, but we know very little about how or why it produces gains. By contrast, programs that have done exemplary work on documenting how and why a program seems to be successful typically provide only evaluation of participants' attitudes toward the program, with little information about the academic literacy development of the participants. We need better designed evaluations that look deeply into both the learning gains and the processes behind those gains (or lack thereof). Until we have integrated, or mixed, methods research designs carried out at a large scale for out-of-school programs, we really have very little to say about which programs are most effective. Even when gains are documented, little evidence exists about which aspects of the programs are producing those gains.

A focus on reading achievement scores, however, demands attention to a cautionary note offered by Robert Granger and Thomas Kane (2004) in an *Education Week* article on improving the quality of afterschool programs, especially in relation to reading achievement: Granger and Kane argue that "we need to be more realistic about what it takes to create discernible effects on achievement-test scores," pointing out that small changes in scores can reflect enormous life changes and experiences for youth. In other words, it takes a great deal to move test scores up a notch (or more), and Granger and Kane argue that this point is particularly true for reading scores. This caution is particularly salient in regard to the increasing demand for more explicit literacy instruction in out-of-school programming: In the bid to enhance literate development, researchers and providers should take steps to ensure that motivating youth programs do not become replicas of the very school contexts that many youth find unmotivating (cf. Halpern, 2003a, 2003b). One way to avoid that pitfall is to ensure that adolescent out-of-school literacy program research attends to both program outcomes and processes. What's more, it will be important to include a broad range of measures in outcomes. Such measures should focus not only on standard achievement scores, but also on youth attitudes, youth participation, school attendance, and parent perspectives and participation. Qualitative outcome measures can also be obtained by examining portfolios of youth growth over time as they participate in projects. In addition, process measures of program enactment will be central to understanding how gains are achieved or constrained by day-to-day program strengths and challenges. Given those caveats, it appears from the available research that programs for early adolescents can be successful in the short term if they provide homework help or tutoring. Programs for older adolescents are most successful, especially in the long term, if they embed literacy learning in meaningful literacy-based activities. In general, effective programs are ones that acknowledge the developmental needs of adolescents and integrate attention to academic, social, and emotional features of adolescent life. For example, successful literacy programs usually employ texts that interest youth; engage youth in purposeful activities; and encourage youth control over activities,

with support from elders (Eccles & Templeton, 2001; McLaughlin et al., 2001)

This last point regarding youth control with support from elders—particularly program "teachers"—is particularly challenging. At the same time that youth should be participating in decision-making, they must also be supported by careful adult guidance, the kind of guidance that might be described as "leading from behind," in which adults offer support and nurturing, but do not take over and prescribe the activities. These adults need to have extensive expertise for apprenticing youth without controlling their literacy practices. Few youth workers have both the disciplinary expertise, the literacy expertise, and the pedagogical expertise necessary for such nuanced adolescent literacy scaffolding.

Adults also must not be absent from the daily work of the activities. In fact, another key quality of successful programs appears to be the multiple opportunities for one-to-one teacher-student interactions, combined with small-group activity and collaboration. This last clause is important to stress: Programs that are solely one-on-one tutoring programs produce some academic literacy gains in the short run, but do not necessarily provide opportunities to learn more sophisticated literacy skills that required for collaboration, communication, and critique. Nor do these support programs teach youth to be independent literacy or disciplinary content learners.

On a related note, some of the best programs included strong parent and/or community engagement. For example, the TASC program demonstrated high levels of parental and school administrator involvement and links, and showed gains in student academic performances. The Quest for Excellence Program, by contrast, which did not include high parent involvement, ended after four years, and demonstrated negative gains in reading scores over time.

A final important quality is attention to the demands of school curricula (e.g., subject matter learning demands) within non-school like programs. That is, school curricular demands must be addressed—and certainly should not be contradicted—but should be embedded in highly purposeful and engaging activities that sustain student interest. This last point may have important implications for what schools could learn from out-of-school learning time programs that have successfully engaged youth in highly demanding projects related to content-area concepts. Rather than out-of-school programs integrating school-like activities into their programs, it may be that school curricula should be modeled after some of the best out-of-school projects (see work on embedding explicit content area literacy learning within project-based learning in schools (Goldman, 1997; Moje et al., 2004b; Moll & Gonzalez, 1994), rather than attempting to make out-of-school programs more like school.

Promising Programs

Below is a list of out-of-school time providers who were interviewed and contributed in developing this guidebook.

After-School Learning Center
Sunset Neighborhood Beacon Center
3925 Noriega St
San Francisco, CA 94122
P: 414-759-3690
F: 415-759-0883
www.snbc.org

After School Matters
66 E Randolph, 4th Floor
Chicago, IL 60601
P: 312-742-4184
F: 312-742-6631
www.afterschoolmatters.org

The Breakthrough Collaborative
40 First Street
Fifth Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
P: 415-442-0600
F: 415-442-0609
www.breakthroughcollaborative.org

Children's Aid Society
105 East 22nd Street
New York, NY 10010
P: 212-949-4800
http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/

Citizen Schools
308 Congress Street
Boston, MA 02210
P: 617-695-2300
F: 617-695-2367
citizenschools.org

The Comic Book Project
Teachers College, Columbia University
520A Horace Mann Hall - Box 139
525 West 120th St
New York, NY 10027
P: 212-330-7444
www.comicbookproject.org

DC Creative Writing Workshop
601 Mississippi Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20032
P: 202-297-1957
F: 202-645-3426
www.dccww.org

Family Learning Institute
1954 S. Industrial Highway
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
P: 734-995-6816
F: 734-995-6861
www.familylearninginstitute.org

Heads Up
645 Pennsylvania Ave, SE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20003
P: 202-544-4468
F: 202-544-4437
www.headsup-dc.org

Higher Achievement
317 8th Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002-6107
P: 202-544-3633
F: 202-544-3644
www.higherachievement.org

The Homework Zone
Foundations, Inc.
Moorestown West Corporate Center
2 Executive Dr.
Suite 1
Moorestown, NJ 08057-4245
P: 856-533-1600
www.foundationsince.org

Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit
610 Antoinette St
Detroit, MI 48202-3416
P: 313-872-6910
F: 313-872-6920
mosaicdetroit.org

National Association for
Urban Debate Leagues
332 S. Michigan Ave.
Suite 500
Chicago, IL 60604
P: 312-427-8101
www.urbandebate.org

Open Door of Maryland
518 Virginia Ave
Towson, MD 21286
P: 410-825-6300
F: 410-825-6304
www.opendoorcare.com

Rochester After-School Academy (RASA)
21st Century Community Learning Centers
Administrative Office - 250 State Street
Rochester, NY 14614
P: 585-428-7952
F: 585-428-7872
www.ci.rochester.ny.us/prhs/humanservices/index.cfm

Trail Blazers
250 W 57th St, Room 2202
New York, NY 10019
P: 212-529-5113
F: 2125292704
www.trailblazers.org

University of Kansas
Center for Research on Learning
Joseph R. Pearson Hall
1122 West Campus Rd, Rm 510
Lawrence, KS 66045-3101
P: 785-864-0567
F: 785-864-5728
www.ku-crl.org

Youth Speaks
2169 Folsom Street S-100
San Francisco, CA 94110
P: 415-255-9035
F: 415-255-9065
www.youthspeaks.org

Resources for Adolescent Literacy Development in OST

Adolescent Literacy Resource Organizations

Alliance for Excellent Education
1201 Connecticut Ave, NW
Suite 901
Washington, DC 20036
P: 202-828-0828,
F: 202-828-0821
http://www.all4ed.org/

International Reading Association
Headquarters Office
800 Barksdale Rd.
PO Box 8139
Newark, DE 19714-8139
P: 1-800-336-READ
F: 302-731-1057
http://www.reading.org/

New Literacies Research Team
University of Connecticut
Neag School of Education
249 Glenbrook Rd., Unit 2033
Storrs, CT 06269
P: 860-486-0202
F: 860-486-2994
http://www.newliteracies.uconn.edu/

Out-of-School Time Resource Organizations

Afterschool Alliance
1616 H St., NW
Suite 820
Washington, DC 20006
P: 202-347-2030
F: 202-347-2092
http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/

Center for Summer Learning Johns Hopkins
University Education Building
Suite 307
2800 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
P: (410) 516-6228
F: (410) 516-6222
http://www.jhu.edu/teachbaltimore/index.html

Community Network for Youth Development
657 Mission Street
Suite #410
San Francisco, CA 94105
P: 415-495-0622
F: 415-495-0666
www.cnyd.org

The Forum for Youth Investment
The Cady-Lee House
7064 Eastern Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20012
P: 202-207-3333
F: 202-207-3329
http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org

Harvard Family Research Project
Harvard Graduate School of Education
3 Garden Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
P: 617-495-9108
F: 617-495-8594
http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~hfrp/

National Afterschool Association
529 Main Street
Suite 214
Charlestown, MA 02129
P: 617-778-8242
F: 617-778-6025
www.naaweb.org

National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST)
Wellesley Centers for Women
Wellesley College
106 Central Street
Wellesley, MA 02481 USA
P: 781-283-2547
F: 781-283-3657
www.niost.org

National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 East 7th Street, Suite 200
Austin, TX 78701-3253
P: 800-476-6861
F: 512-476-2286
http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/

National Youth Development Information Center
National Collaboration for Youth
1319 F Street, NW
Suite 402
Washington, DC 20004
P: 202-347-2080
F: 202-393-4517
www.nydic.org

21st Century Community Learning Office
US Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
400 Maryland Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20202
http://www.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html

YouthLearn
Education Development Center, Inc.
55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02458
P: 800-449-5525
http://www.youthlearn.org/afterschool/

Curriculum

The Homework Zone
Foundations, Inc.
Moorestown West Corporate Center
2 Executive Dr.
Suite 1
Moorestown, NJ 08057-4245
P: 856-533-1600
www.foundationsince.org

Kidzlit
Developmental Studies Center
2000 Embarcadero
Suite 305
Oakland, CA 94606-5300
P: 800-666-7270
F: 510-464-3670
www.devstu.org

Strategic Tutoring
University of Kansas
Center for Research on Learning
Joseph R. Pearson Hall
1122 West Campus Rd.
Rm 510
Lawrence, KS 66045-3101
P: 785-864-0567
F: 785-864-5728
www.ku-crl.org

Teen Outreach Program
Wyman, Inc.
600 Kiwanis Drive
Eureka, MO 63025
T: 636-938-5245
F: 636-938-5289
www.wymancenter.org

Reading Assessments

For a review of middle and high school resources for assessing youth reading please see sister publication: *Measure for Measure: A Critical Consumers' Guide to Reading Comprehension Assessments for Adolescents* at: http://www.carnegie.org/literacy.

Particular resources that we have used or recommend:

GRADES K-12

- Qualitative Reading Inventory, 3rd Edition (QRI), Allyn & Bacon.
- Gates MacGinite Reading Tests 4th Edition (GMRT-R), Riverside Publishing.
- Woods Moe Analytical Reading Inventory, 6th Edition, Prentice Hall (1998).
- Content Area Reading Inventory (Readence, Bean, & Baldwin, 1989).
- Literacy Practices Interview (Moje, 2006).
- Literacy Process Interview (Moje, 2006).

GRADES 3-5

- Observation Survey, by Marie Clay (Reading Recovery Assessment).
- Woodcock Reading Mastery Test — Revised (WRMT-R).
- Rigby PM Benchmark Test or Informal Reading Assessment (IRA).

Literacy Process Interview Protocol

To be used as an assessment tool when talking with students as they participate in reading and writing activities. The questions serve only as a protocol, with specific questions framed for particular reading and writing activities as they occur. The participants' responses are not scored on a scale, but are used to guide program educators as they teach youth different literacy skills and strategies.

Generic Activity

- What are you doing/working on?
- I see that you're doing some reading/writing as part of this activity. What are you reading/writing right now?
- Why are you reading/writing?
- Do you have to read/write in order to participate in this activity?

- What would happen if you didn't read this?
- What do you do if you don't know how to read a word or if you read something and it doesn't make sense?

- What would happen if you didn't write this?
- Do you ever worry about whether what you write will make sense to the person who reads it later?

Reading Texts

- What part of this text are you reading?
- Why are you reading it?
- What are you thinking about as you read?
- What do you like about this text?
- Are there any parts that you don't understand?
  - What did you/are you doing when you come to parts you don't understand?
- Are there any words that you don't understand?
  - What did you/are you doing when you come to words you don't understand?
- Here, read this part aloud for me.
  - STOP AFTER 2 SENTENCES:

- Can you explain to me what that part was about?
- What does it have to do with what you're reading?
- Did you learn something about this in class already?
- Why do you think you're reading this?
- Have you ever read about anything like that before?
- Does this remind you of anything?

Writing a Text

- What are you writing?
- Why are you writing it?
- What are you thinking about as you write it?
- Do you like what you've written so far? OR Do you think that what you've written fulfills the requirements you've been given?
- Have you had any problems while you've been working on this piece?
- Who do you think will end up reading this, if anyone?
- What do you think they'll think of it?

Literacy Practices Interview

To identify varying levels of reading and writing use/
engagement among different youth;

1. You can choose to read a lot of different things.
   Take a look at these pictures of different reading
   materials. If you could choose any of these,
   which one would you choose to read first?
   *(A separate notebook with color photos of many types
   of texts is used to supplement this interview.)*
   a. What made you pick X [interviewer should say
      text type/name aloud] first?
   b. Have you actually read that before this, or did
      you just think you might like to read it?
   c. Which one would you pick second?
   d. What made you pick X second?
   e. Have you actually read that before this, or did
      you just think you might like to read it?
   f. What would be your third choice?
   g. What made you pick X third?
   h. Have you actually read that before this, or did
      you just think you might like to read it?
2. If there are other things you most like to read
   that aren't in the pictures, please tell me about
   them.
   a. What sorts of things are you best at reading?
      (EV items)
   b. Why do you read these things?
   c. Where do you get the things you read?
   d. Do other kids you know also read these?
   e. Do people older than you read these things?
   f. How do you find these materials?
   g. Where do you read [insert the text participant
      named]?
   h. Do you ever read [insert the text participant
      named] with other people? What kinds of
      people? *(e.g., Advise participant not to name
      people but to describe relationships, types of people
      such as friends, siblings, relatives.)*

To identify specific reasons for reading and writing.
3. How often do you read just for fun?
4. Can you give me an example [e.g., title] of one of
   the things that you read for fun?
5. Why do you find it fun to read [insert the text
   named by the participant]?

To identify and begin to collect specific texts and
text types that youth are reading and writing;

6. What kinds of things do you read in order to
   help yourself or other people get things done?
   (probes, if necessary)
   - Manuals
   - Recipes
   - Catalogs
   - Sewing patterns
   - Internet web pages
   - Instructions
   - References (dictionary, atlas, encyclopedia)
   - Phone book
   - Bus schedules
   - Family mail
   - Newsletters
   - Newspaper

To begin to identify social networks in which
reading and writing occur and to document how those
networks mediate the reading and writing practices

7. How many books would you say you have in
   your house?
8. Do you read things together with your family
   members? (e.g., newspapers, TV guide, sports reports,
   magazines, family letters/emails, official letters)
9. How often do you go to the local library to
   borrow books, CDs, videos? With whom?
10. Do your friends have books that they share with
    you? What are they?
11. Do you share books with your friends?
    Which ones?

To begin to document intersections between print and visual media practices;

12. How often do you use the computer?
13. Do you use the internet (www) to read information about your favorite actors/heroines/heroes/sporting stars/singers/bands/musicians?
14. Are there things you see and hear about on television that you then go and read more about those things on the internet or in books?
15. Do you ever buy / borrow books or magazines about your favorite films or performers?
16. What kinds of computer games do you like to play?
17. Have you ever done fanfiction writing on line or with friends on paper?
18. What do you know about websites or blogs?

To begin to identify human and material resources and affordances for reading and writing; (*see also section 1)

19. Do you see yourself as a reader?
20. Do your family members see you as someone who likes reading?
21. When you get gifts and presents from family members, do they often give you books that suit your interests?
22. When was the last time that a member of your family bought you a book?

To begin to document various reading and writing identities.

23. Here are some pictures of different people reading different things in different ways:

- Which one of these pictures *looks most like* something you would do?
- Which one *sort of looks* like something you would do?
- Which one *looks least like* you something you would do?

24. Some people feel that reading and writing are very important skills to have in order to be a successful and happy person in the world, other people say it doesn't matter. What do you think about that?

WRITING

25. Do you write outside of school?
26. What do you write?
27. Why do you write?
28. How often do you write?
29. How good at writing are you? (Probe: not at all good… very good)
30. How often do you write just for fun?
31. What kinds of things do you write just for fun?
   - Comic books
   - Teen 'zines
   - Newspaper (school, local, or other) contributions
   - Chapter books (not for school work)
   - Information books (biographies, how-to books, science, books about different subjects)
   - Picture books
   - Internet web pages
   - Email
   - Bible, Catechism, Torah, Koran, or other religious writings
   - Poetry
   - Music lyrics
   - Letters or notes
   - Catalog order forms
32. Do you write [insert the text participant named] with other people? What kinds of people?
33. Who do you write for?
34. Who reads the things you write?
35. What makes you really *want to write* something?
36. What makes you really *not want to write* something?
37. Do you ever write in order to help yourself or other people get things done? (e.g., instructions, recipes, family mail).

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Endnotes

[1] In addition, access to information has expanded as a result of access to digital environments, so that a young person in Detroit, Michigan, USA can access libraries or websites of writers in Sao Paolo, Brazil with the click of a mouse. Such access brings with it new literacy dilemmas, as readers must sift through information from unknown sources and unedited sites.

[2] As defined by the 2005 NAEP.

[3] A Note on Promising Practices: In this guidebook, we are highlighting several innovative OST programs that address adolescent literacy development. Programs included in this guidebook have documented their success through primarily internal evaluation mechanisms that track the progress of their participants. None of the programs has undergone a thorough experimental study of their techniques, a rarity in the OST field, and are therefore presented as *promising practices*, interventions demonstrating several key elements that we feel merit consideration for advancing adolescent literacy in OST. That said, it should be noted that each of the programs we feature has demonstrated success through internal evaluation and has been deemed successful by participants, parents, partner schools, and community partners. Thus, these programs can be considered exemplars of successful practices, although we will also highlight additional features that could be added to further develop adolescents' literacy skills.

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