the evaluation exchange

A PERIODICAL ON EMERGING STRATEGIES IN EVALUATING CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT ⊠ HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION ⊠ VOLUME XI NUMBER 1 ⊠ SPRING 2005

from the director's desk



Heather Weiss

The national conversation about how to better educate our children, particularly those who are economically disadvantaged, has shifted and is reaching a tipping point. The debate is no longer defined by the view that learning happens only in schools. Rather, reinforced by many years of research, it has advanced toward the realization that from birth onward, learning happens across multiple contexts—in families, early care and education programs, schools, out-of-school time and youth programs, and community settings and institutions, including libraries, museums, and faith-based organizations.

A new and strong emphasis on educational accountability has helped to drive this change. School performance data tell us that many schools are neither meeting the learning benchmarks of the No Child Left Behind Act nor reducing racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps. Consequently, many now argue that while good schools remain critical, schools alone cannot educate our children.

Now is the time to tip the debate from dialogue to action. The question we must ask is, in addition to quality schools, what nonschool learning resources should we invest in and scale up to improve educational outcomes, narrow achievement gaps, and equip our children with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the complex and global 21st century?

In hopes of inspiring broad, creative thinking about nonschool supports and their potential, we put forward, as this issue's theme, the idea of "complementary learning." As explained in the issue's Theory & Practice section, complementary learning refers to the idea that school and life success requires an array of learning supports. To be most effective, these supports should complement one another, moving out of their silos and working together to create an integrated, accessible set of community-wide resources that support learning and development. Finally, while nonschool resources should be aligned with public schools, they should not be limited by them.

Emergent thinking about nonschool supports that warrant investment, along with promising ways to link, assess, and scale them, is a highlight of this issue. Featured are the voices of two renowned experts—Richard Rothstein and Edmund Gordon—whose thinking and writing is helping to lead the evidence-based debate about the necessity of key nonschool supports. Our consultation with experts continues with an overview of ways in which several foundations are applying complementary-learning ideas in their grantmaking. In the Promising Practices section we offer examples of ways nonschool supports can complement and support joint learning outcomes; and in Evaluations to Watch we present two examples of how to use theories of change to develop, guide, and assess complementary-learning efforts.

So what is new about complementary learning? The core components and efforts to scale and link nonschool supports have been discussed for many years and have been manifested in many fledgling policies and programs. What's new is that more educators, parents, policymakers, teachers, funders, and others are reaching a tipping point in their understanding of what it takes to prepare children for success in school and in life. It is our hope that this issue helps to move us even closer to that threshold, which, when reached, will result in a more comprehensive solution for improving learning outcomes.



Heather B. Weiss, Ed.D.
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Beyond the Classroom: Complementary Learning to Improve Achievement Outcomes

Harvard Family Research Project introduces complementary learning as a concept for improving learning outcomes without relying solely on school-based reform.

The widening achievement gap, especially for some low-income children of color, has brought us to a critical point in our national debate about effective education policy reform. Further, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and various school-funding lawsuits have raised questions about what an adequate basic education is and have increased our awareness about the challenges many public schools face in helping children meet their full potential, from birth through post-secondary education.

In response to these problems, numerous within-school education reform initiatives have been introduced.[1] But as yearly test results roll out, the limits of these reforms are becoming clear. Educators, parents, and others increasingly look to nonschool supports that will enhance and promote learning and development across the developmental continuum. We call these supports complementary learning.

Decades of research show that complementary-learning supports—including high quality early childhood education, family support, family involvement at home and in school, and after school programs—can be effective in promoting children's learning and contributing to their school success. However, we now realize that considering these supports in the same old ways—piecemeal, in silos, disconnected from each other and from schools—will not achieve the goal of making sure children are successful both when they first enter school and after they've finished school. Moving forward, we need to ensure that these nonschool supports, first and foremost, are in place and accessible to all children. Second, we propose that they be linked and aligned with each other and with schools to maximize their effectiveness in leveling the playing field for children.

This installment of Theory & Practice articulates our concept of complementary learning as a framework for thinking about the importance of, and linkages among, the many contexts, activities, and actions—both school and nonschool—in which children learn. It is meant to stimulate new field-level thinking about what it takes to educate children for the 21st century and announces to our readership HFRP's commitment to help build the strategies for complementary learning and the knowledge and practice base to support them.

Complementary Learning Defined

To set the stage for a broad, research-based discussion of complementary learning, HFRP published a series of recent issues of The Evaluation Exchange examining the developmental and evaluation knowledge base for key complementary-learning supports, highlighting challenges in evaluating them and bringing them to scale, and suggesting next-generation strategies and questions.[2] These publications, along with HFRP's own research, evaluation, and documentation of innovative nonschool supports, suggest two essential principles to guide thinking about how to develop complementary-learning systems so that children both enter and leave school with the knowledge and skills they need for success in life:

1. Both school and nonschool contexts are critical to children's learning and achievement. Families, out-of-school-time (OST) programs, youth service agencies, and community-based organizations, as well as informal learning opportunities such as libraries, museums, churches, the arts, and sports teams, can complement school-day learning and

[1] See, for example, The Evaluation Exchange, (9)2.

[2] The winter 2004/2005 and spring 2002 issues of The Evaluation Exchange cover the topics of family and community support and involvement; the summer 2004 issue covers early childhood education; out-of-school time programs are explored in the spring 2003 and spring 2004 issues; schools and education reform are covered in the summer 2003 issue; and the fall 2003 issue looks at community-based initiatives. www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/archives.html

lead to more effective and sustainable educational efforts. Richard Rothstein, author of Class and Schools, discusses these ideas in our Questions & Answers interview on page 12. The discussion is bolstered by Edmund Gordon's concept of "supplementary education" articulated so well in a new volume of the same name (see book review on page 7 —Ed.). We know, for example, that high quality, organized OST activities have the potential to support and promote youth development because they (a) situate youth in safe environments; (b) prevent youth from engaging in delinquent activities; (c) teach youth general and specific skills, beliefs, and behaviors; and (d) provide opportunities for youth to develop relationships with peers and mentors.[3] In fact, evidence increasingly shows that youth participation in quality OST activities influences their current outcomes, which, in turn, impact outcomes into adulthood.[4]

Longitudinal research by HFRP and others on the ways family educational involvement promotes low-income children's literacy achievement through elementary school suggests the large value-added of family involvement in the home and at school.[5] Additionally, children need support from health and mental health organizations to ensure that they are both physically and emotionally ready to learn.

2. Learning opportunities and contexts should complement one another. A second cornerstone of complementary learning is the notion that the many contexts in which children learn should complement one another and work toward a consistent range of outcomes. Developmental psychology, education, and other fields have long shown that these contexts have reciprocal influences on children as well as on each other.[6] Being strategic about the way in which contexts connect, and building on the strengths of multiple learning contexts, can be a more effective way to improve child outcomes than if these contexts continue to operate independently of one another.

Ideally, from birth through high school, children would benefit from a coherent continuum of learning opportunities in various contexts. That continuum should begin during the early years with quality parenting, child care, and pre-kindergarten programs, continue through childhood and adolescence to include after school and summer programs, and extend all the way through college preparation.

To achieve this broad and systemic vision, learning contexts need to connect through deliberate and targeted strategies that focus programmatic energy, resources, and time on shared functions or common goals. This means finding meaningful ways for two or more learning contexts—such as schools and after school programs, or families and early care and education programs—to connect so they work toward the same or complementary ends, ultimately improving one another's effectiveness. Consider the following examples:

- Early care and education, families, and schools. Today's policy environment places a strong emphasis on school readiness and, in particular, on children's literacy development. We know that quality childcare and early childhood education affect children's cognitive development.[7] We also know that the home environment is crucial to addressing the achievement gap.[8] Early care and education programs and schools that support positive parenting practices and family involvement in children's learning will help to ensure that children enter school ready to learn and to stay on track once they get there.
- After school programs and schools. Investments in after school programs have increased over the past decade as a means of keeping youth safe while parents work, and as a way of promoting academic, social, and cultural development in the non-school hours. Improving academic outcomes and narrowing the achievement gap is one goal of many after school programs. Consequently, programs increasingly are collaborating with

America's Promise: Mobilizing Community-Based Complementary Learning

America's Promise is a national collaborative action network designed to mobilize communities so that every child receives the resources essential to his or her growth and success. The framework is known as the "Five Promises." These include ongoing relationships with caring adults, safe places with structured activities, a healthy start, an effective education for marketable skills, and opportunities to give back. Recently the network launched a national campaign to name the "100 Best Communities for Young People," seeking to encourage every community in America to become a great place to grow up. An upcoming report to the nation from the group should serve as a useful resource for those looking for community-based examples of complementary-learning approaches, collaboration, and new evaluation strategies. www.americaspromise.org

[3] Eccles. J. S., & Gootman, J. A. (Eds.). (2002). Community programs to promote youth development. Washington, DC: National Academies Press; Simpkins, S. D. (2003). Does youth participation in out-of-school time activities make a difference? The Evaluation Exchange, 9(1), 2–3, 21.

[4] Gambone, M. A., Klem, A. M., & Connell, J. P. (2002). Finding out what matters for youth: Testing key links in a community action framework for youth development. Philadelphia: Youth Development Strategies and Institute for Research and Reform in Education.

[5] Dearing, E., McCartney, K., Weiss, H. B., Kreider, H., & Simpkins, S. (2004). The promotive effects of family educational involvement for low-income children's literacy. Journal of School Psychology, 42(6), 445–460.

[6] Spencer, M. B., Dupree, D., & Hartmann, T. (1997). A phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory (PVEST): A self-organization perspective in context. Development & Psychopathology, 9(4), 817–833; Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. American Psychologist, 32, 513–531; Cook, T. D., Herman, M. R., Phillips, M., & Settersten, R. A., Jr. (2002). Some ways in which neighborhoods, nuclear families, friendship groups, and schools jointly affect changes in early adolescent development. Child Development, 73(4), 1283–1309; Furstenberg, F. F., Jr., Cook, T. D., Eccles, J., Elder, G. H., Jr., & Sameroff, A. (2000). Managing to make it: Urban families and adolescent success. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[7] NICHD Early Child Care Research Network. (2002). Early child care and children's development prior to school entry: Results from the NICHD Study of Early Child Care. American Educational Research Journal, 39, 133–164.

[8] Brooks-Gunn, J., & Markman, L. B. (2005). The contribution of parenting to ethnic and racial gaps in school readiness. The Future of Children, 15(1), 139–168; Hart, B., & Risley, T. R. (1995). Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young American children. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

The Harlem Children's Zone: Complementary Learning in Practice

The Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) is a comprehensive community-building initiative designed to improve outcomes for children and families living within a 60-block area of central Harlem. With its interconnected and tightly woven web of services for children and adults, HCZ is a prime example of complementary learning in practice.

Led by Geoffrey Canada, HCZ is improving outcomes for low-income children by focusing on the whole community. Two core principles inspire this approach. The first is that children are more likely to be healthy and successful when surrounded by adults who can parent effectively and engage with children educationally, socially, and culturally. The second is that early intervention is critical for successful development. From birth on, children must have adequate health care, intellectual and social stimulation, and consistent guidance from attentive adults.

HCZ's approach to improving child outcomes supports multiple aspects of children's lives, in both the school and non-school hours. Believing that achieving positive child outcomes is difficult, if not impossible, in "disintegrated" communities, HCZ offers a network of connected supports designed to ensure children are safe, healthy, productive, and academically proficient. Children in HCZ's "service zone" have access to a continuum of programs and services that follow them developmentally, beginning at birth and extending through college.

HCZ's system of community-wide services for children and adults is one of the most comprehensive in the country. Supports include workshops for new parents, family support centers, preschool programs, schools that function as community centers, employment and technology centers, after school initiatives, and health services and programs.

Evaluation is critically important to HCZ, described as "one of the biggest social experiments of our time."* Evaluation efforts are underway to examine whether individual programs are successful and whether the integrated network of supports HCZ offers is effective as a whole in improving child and family outcomes. The evaluation is assessing the initiative's goals (which include supporting families to care for their children, improving academic outcomes, and supporting positive youth development), documenting implementation, assuring excellence in programming, and assessing outcomes associated with different levels and durations of participation. As part of the evaluation, HCZ has developed a database that includes all program participants and tracks their participation. Early evaluation findings show a high usage of services by community members (nearly 12,000 children and families), and positive outcomes for specific HCZ programs. www.hcz.org

*Tough, P. (2004, June 20). The Harlem project. New York Times Magazine, p. 44.

schools to support learning and development. For example, by communicating about the needs of individual students, teachers, along with after school staff and volunteers, share valuable information that helps them to know youth and their families better, to tailor their work to students' unique strengths and needs, and to develop methods that complement, but do not replicate, one another.

- Families, schools, and communities. Meaningful and authentic relationships between families, schools, and communities are associated with positive school outcomes.[9] As a result, educators and community leaders concerned about the achievement gap and the need for meaningful civic engagement in education are beginning to create models, processes, and projects that move away from a school-centered view of family involvement to one focused on the families and the communities in which children live. Family involvement that is co-constructed by parents and teachers ensures that family and community expertise serve as a resource for children's learning.[10]
- A continuum of integrated family, school, and comprehensive community services. While multi-agency efforts to build continua of the preventive and early intervention services from early childhood through high school are difficult to implement and especially difficult to sustain, a number of well-established efforts are beginning to show evidence of preventing negative behaviors and effectively promoting learning and enhanced educational achievement. Partnership for Results, in Auburn, New York, exemplifies this. A collaboration among health, mental health, human services, and law enforcement, the Partnership has implemented a continuum of evidence-based programs with integrated service planning, assessment, and databases for performance management and tracking of results. Services include enhanced school and out-of-school programs. Their results show better outcomes for all of the partners, including schools, with less violent behavior and marked improvements in academic outcomes.[11]

While connections can occur between individuals or programs, they can also occur at a systems level, with partnerships that cut across a full range of learning contexts.[12] For example, with a mission of providing significant positive opportunities for children and youth within a 60-block area of central Harlem, the Harlem Children's Zone, led by Geoffrey Canada, has developed an in-

[9] Fan, X., & Chen, M. (2001). Parental involvement and students' academic achievement: A meta-analysis. Educational Psychology Review, 13, 1–22.; Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory; Jeynes, W. H. (2005). A meta-analysis of the relation of parental involvement to urban elementary school student academic achievement. Urban Education, 40(3), 237–269.

[10] Lopez, M. E., Kreider, H., & Caspe, M. (2004). Co-constructing family involvement. The Evaluation Exchange, 10(4). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project.

[11] Uninsky, P. B. (n.d.). The second mouse's agenda: A comprehensive model for preventing and reducing violence in the lives of school-age children. Unpublished manuscript. Draft available from Partnership for Results, 144 Genesee Street, Suite 410, Auburn, NY 13021.

[12] Pianta, R. C., Kraft-Sayre, M., Rimm-Kaufman, S., Gerke, N., & Higgins, T. (2001). Collaboration in building partnerships between families and schools: The National Center for Early Development and Learning's Kindergarten Transition Intervention. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 16(1), 117–132.

tegrated community-wide network of services and supports that includes school-based community centers, parenting programs, youth programs, family support, health services, and job training (see the box).

Complementary-Learning Implications

As we look to the future it is our hope that complementary learning extend beyond its use as a conceptual frame. To realize this goal, we propose a set of action steps necessary to move forward a complementary-learning agenda:

1. Further recognition of, and investments in, nonschool learning contexts and supports. We noted earlier that decades of research have demonstrated the clear influence of nonschool factors and contexts on children's learning. For example, brain development research shows us that children are born ready to learn and that early experiences significantly impact how the brain develops.[13] Longitudinal research has demonstrated that quality preschool programs can help to ensure that children raised in poverty do not enter school significantly behind their wealthier peers and that preschool can have long-term benefits and cost savings.[14] Additionally, evaluations of out-of-school time programs show their impact on children's academic and social adjustment.[15]

Given this ever-increasing evidence base, if we are serious about narrowing the achievement gap, investments in these supports need to increase so that more children—especially low-income children and students of color—have access to quality educational experiences outside the school context. While school-based reforms are important, ignoring or not investing adequately in what happens outside of school will have a negative effect on the overall success of reforms.

[13] Shonkoff, J. P., & Phillips, D. A. (Eds.). (2000). From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

[14] See, for example, Schweinhart, L. J., Montie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W. S., Belfield, C. R., & Nores, M. (2005). Lifetime effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 40. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.

[15] Miller, B. M. (2003). Critical hours: Afterschool programs and educational success. Quincy, MA: Nellie Mae Education Foundation; Simpkins, S. (2003). Does youth participation in out-of-school activities make a difference? The Evaluation Exchange, 9(1), 2–3, 21.

PRACTICAL MECHANISMS FOR CONNECTING LEARNING CONTEXTS

Linking Mechanisms	Example Applications	Related Articles in This Issue
Professional Development and Staffing	Training kindergarten and early childhood staff together on early literacy development Staffing after school programs with teachers or through other community resources (e.g., businesses, universities)	Project HOPE: Working Across Multiple Contexts to Support At-Risk Students – page 8
Public and Institutional Policy	Fostering cross-agency collaboration between education and human service agencies that filters from the state to local level Aligning schools and community-based programs through standards	Learning Is Everyone's Business: Learning Supports in Iowa – page 9 Increasing the Bottom Line by Supporting Families – page 15 Seattle School District's Community Alignment Initiative – page 20
Family Involvement	Involving parents in early childhood or after school programs Engaging families in decision making at community and institutional levels	Engaging Families in Out-of-School Time Programs – page 11
Technology and Other Communication Tools	Developing a website that helps parents or after school programs track what is being taught in the classroom Using technology to improve communication that helps coordinate funding streams and meet accountability requirements	Technology Goes Home: Connecting Families, Communities, and Schools – page 10
Research and Evaluation	Sharing data about children's progress and achievement with parents Researching the factors that predict participation in after school programs Demonstrating the value of interconnected services and initiatives to funders	Studying Contextual Predictors of Participation in Out-of-School Time Activities – page 14
Public and Private Funding	Funding initiatives or programs focused on collaboration between learning contexts (e.g., arts programs and schools, high schools and universities, etc.)	360 Degrees of Literacy: A Look at a Community Partnership in Dallas – page 21 Investing in Connections – page 16 Evaluating Partnerships: Seven Success Factors – page 18 SPARKing Innovation – page 22

Knowledge Development and Evaluation for HIV/AIDS Antiretroviral Therapy: A Parallel for Complementary Learning

Concerns about American economic competitiveness, increased awareness of the failure of many children to reach learning standards, and heightened attention to racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps are creating a new willingness to invest in complementary-learning supports. This, in turn, challenges us to develop a new approach to learning, performance management, and evaluation. Instructive parallels exist with the way in which public health professionals are developing learning and evaluation systems to guide and assess efforts to scale up antiretroviral therapy (ART) for HIV/AIDS in Africa.

As the recent Institute of Medicine Report Scaling Up Treatment for the Global AIDS Pandemic argues, ART requires a complex, multisystem effort and efficient use of very scarce resources.[1] Limited knowledge exists about which ART programs work or how necessary key components should link together. Even less is known about whether they can be replicated and scaled up with positive effects. Much of what we know about ART has been learned in resource-rich countries and will not necessarily generalize to resource-poor locations. In this case, the usual argument—do the research, see what works, and then go to scale—will not work. As a result, public health professionals are developing a new approach to what they call "monitoring and evaluation."[2]

This approach emphasizes usable knowledge that gets disseminated quickly to inform practice, and the strategic use of clinical trials and meta-analytic syntheses. It builds efforts to strengthen government capacity to track progress and organizes multidonor consensus on standards and benchmarks. The Institute of Medicine report also argues that in the complex, harmonized multidonor effort that is required to scale-up ART, it will be impossible to attribute change to particular donors and wasteful to try.

Complementary learning is in a similar situation. We do not have a research-based recipe for success, but there is an urgency to act and to have a monitoring and evaluation strategy to guide the effort. Future issues of The Evaluation Exchange will look further at public health and other approaches to monitoring and evaluation that can inform thinking about knowledge development strategies for complementary learning. We welcome readers' contributions to this effort.

[1] Curran, J., Debas, H., Arya, M., Kelley, P., Knobler, S., & Pray, L. (Eds.). (2004). Scaling up treatment for the global AIDS pandemic: Challenges and opportunities. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

[2] Rugg, D., Peersman, G., & Carael, M. (Eds.). (2004). Global advances in HIV/AIDS monitoring and evaluation [Special issue]. New Directions for Evaluation, 103.

2. Increase complementary connections between learning contexts. While recent efforts to build more comprehensive systems[16] and networks through collaboration have increased the number of programs and organizations that connect for the benefit of children, progress has been slow and uneven. To have the impact on learning outcomes that we believe is possible, the number of organizations, programs, and resources that connect will need to increase vastly. Moreover, enhancing the quality of these connections will be critical.

Putting complementary learning into practice requires that learning contexts be connected in meaningful ways. These connections can be facilitated by certain "linking mechanisms" that serve as on-the-ground, practical ties. Linking mechanisms are real-world practices that cut across contexts to forge connections that might not otherwise exist. Mechanisms may include, but are not limited to, professional development and staffing, public and institutional policies, family involvement, technology and other communication tools, research and evaluation, and public and private funding.

For example, family involvement in school-based after school programs can help parents learn about and feel more comfortable in their children's schools. Professional development can facilitate knowledge sharing among early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers that will facilitate smooth school transitions. Collaborative funding streams can promote resource sharing among multiple service providers, and can promote evaluation for shared accountability or continuous learning and improvement.

The table on page 5 outlines key mechanisms for linking learning contexts so that they complement one another. The first column lists the mechanism, the second offers examples of ways the mechanism can be applied, and the third shows where to look in this issue of The Evaluation Exchange for articles that offer examples of these mechanisms in practice.

3. Increase funding for collaborative and complementary endeavors. One challenge to connecting learning contexts is that a financial incentive is often required to get started. Fortunately, in recent years many funders have realized that currently disconnected programs and services can be more cost-effective and sustainable if resources are aligned into a system that supports children and their families in the learning and development process. We have seen an emerging trend in philanthropy toward strategic investments in initiatives working toward these ends. Examples from foundations highlighted in this issue illustrate the kinds of investments we hope will increase in years to come.

4. Develop and support a knowledge base to support these principles. Looking ahead, we believe a more solid knowledge base of research and evaluation to support complementary-learning principles will be needed. While we know a great deal about the contribution of individual learning contexts, we know less about them as connected elements. Although this knowledge base is growing, much more research and documentation is needed to

continued on page 17

[16] The Build Initiative, for example, supports early care and education systems building in select states. www.buildinitiative.org.

Supplementary Education: The Hidden Curriculum of High Academic Achievement

Priscilla Little of HFRP reviews Supplementary Education,[1] a new compilation of essays and papers edited by Edmund Gordon, Beatrice Bridglall, and Aundra Saa Meroe.[2]

Supplementary Education: The Hidden Curriculum of High Academic Achievement, a new book co-edited by Edmund Gordon, Beatrice Bridglall, and Aundra Saa Meroe, makes a compelling case that schooling, while necessary, is not sufficient for high academic achievement. Inequity in access to nonschool supports, the editors argue, both limits the effectiveness of schools and perpetuates a chronic achievement gap, especially for low-income and ethnic minority students. As a remedy, they propose that all students should have access to "supplementary education" opportunities, or formal and informal opportunities for enriched learning and development provided outside of school and beyond the regular school day or year.

This book complements this issue of The Evaluation Exchange: like Gordon, who reflects on his 60-year career in education, we reflect on our 20-plus years of experience, arriving at similar conclusions regarding the key principles of supplementary—or complementary—learning. These are discussed below.

1. Children and youth need access to a variety of nonschool experiences to supplement in-school learning. Gordon posits that an educated person has intellective competence, defined as "the metacognitive command of affective, cognitive, and situative processes to access, know, understand, interpret, and utilize knowledge and technique" (p. 11). Examples include literacy and numeracy, analogical reasoning, and movement from knowledge to understanding. Gordon and colleagues argue that serious disparities exist in intellective competence across social divisions such as class, ethnicity, gender, and language proficiency. These disparities in intellective competence—and therefore high achievement—are related to access to, and community investment in, many forms of capital, including cultural, financial, political, and social. The achievement gap is therefore not a problem of schooling alone but also of these disparities.

2. Children's needs are best addressed when formal school-day curricula and "informal" supports such as after school programs and other productive learning opportunities are coordinated. Gordon and colleagues base their idea of supplementary education on the premise that, in addition to proficiency with a school's formal academic curriculum, high academic achievement is closely linked with exposure to family- and community-based activities and learning experiences that occur outside of school, such as after school programs that provide academic instruction, recreational activities, and engagement with families. For most students of color, these supplementary-education offerings are generally underdeveloped or unavailable.

The authors assert that nonschool supports, including families, are central mechanisms for delivering supplementary educational opportunities. Further, they provide concrete examples of how the different contexts in which young people grow and develop can complement one another and support in-school learning. The authors, for example, call on parents to help young people make good decisions about after school time and to act as advocates on their children's behalf.

3. Parallel systems of supplementary education can enhance school-day learning. Throughout the book are placed-based examples of supplementary education, such as Maitrayee Bhattacharyya's case study of Koreatown, a mixed-income neighborhood in Los Angeles[3] where the community created a system of nonschool supports that coexists with schools and provides extracurricular and academic supports after school and in the summer. Koreatown's 295 supplementary-education programs range from early childhood care and education to college preparation. While no formal evaluation has been conducted of the Koreatown supplementary-education system, Bhattacharyya suggests that participation in this parallel education system is linked to higher school attendance and performance. Further, she posits that supplementary-education initiatives such as Koreatown can facilitate transitions from home to school and from one grade to the next, and that integration across supports is important for these transitions.

In conclusion, Gordon points out a possible additional lesson from Koreatown. Most of the supplementary services offered in that community involve payment from user families; Gordon suggests that a family's investment in supplementary-education services may be critical to children's success, as investment conveys to children the message that their families are willing to make sacrifices on their behalf. That awareness, Gordon suggests, may be as important as participation in the actual service.

In the book's foreword, James Comer comments that "supplementary education is not at issue because it is new; rather, it is problematic because such experiences are not available to many of the children for whom schooling is of limited effectiveness" (p. viii). It is thinking like that of Edmund Gordon and the other authors in this book that can bring supplementary education into the spotlight and create a more level playing field for success for all children.

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[1] Gordon, E. W., Bridglall, B. L., & Meroe, A. S. (2004). Supplementary education: The hidden curriculum of high academic achievement. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

[2] Edmund W. Gordon is a professor emeritus of psychology and education and directs the Institute of Urban and Minority Education (IUME) at Teachers College, Columbia University; he also is a professor emeritus of psychology at Yale University. Beatrice L. Bridglall is assistant director of the IUME, and Aundra Saa Meroe is a postdoctoral research scientist at the College Board and a research associate at IUME.

[3] Thirty-five percent of Koreatown's households earn less than $15,000 per year; approximately 1/3 of the youth in that community live in poverty.

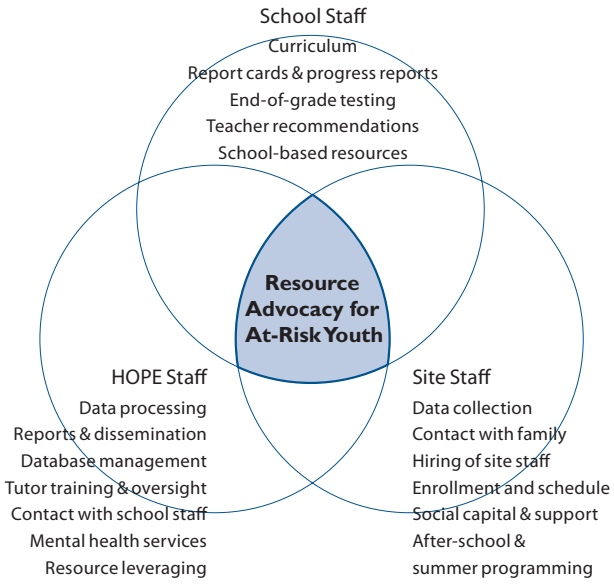
Linkages between the multiple contexts of children's lives—home, school, community, out-of-school time—can be facilitated by a variety of mechanisms, that is, real-world practices that cut across contexts to forge connections that might not otherwise exist. In this issue's Promising Practices section, we feature discussions of several mechanisms being used throughout the country to facilitate linkages: staffing and training, policy, technology, family involvement, and research and evaluation.

Project HOPE: Working Across Multiple Contexts to Support At-Risk Students

Barbara Jentleson and Helen Westmoreland, from Duke University, describe a university–community collaboration targeting the learning and development needs of local youth. This article highlights the mechanism of connecting complementary-learning contexts through staffing patterns and practices.

Since 2002, Project HOPE (Holistic Opportunities Plan for Enrichment) has sponsored after school and summer complementary-learning opportunities through five community centers affiliated with the Duke–Durham Neighborhood Partnership in North Carolina. Funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, Project HOPE is designed to improve the academic and social outcomes of Durham's at-risk youth by targeting the resources of Duke University, its community partners, and Durham Public Schools. In bringing together multiple sources of support, Project HOPE has been able to demonstrate improvements in End-of-Grade (EOG) test scores and report card grades, as well as overall positive views of education, for its participants, the majority of whom are ethnic minorities and come from low-income families.

Project HOPE's Collaborative Staffing Model



The Duke–Durham Partnership works with its community partners to prioritize community needs so that Duke is able to leverage its resources toward stated community issues. The community partners served by Project HOPE sought Duke's help in either bringing resources to existing after school programs or in developing new programs for students who could not enroll in existing programs, largely due to financial constraints.

Each of the five community partners operates as an independent nonprofit organization serving the children in its neighborhood. Through caring staff and engaging programs, these organizations offer support and facilitate family involvement for the youth who attend. Sites remain autonomous in their ability to hire staff, create program schedules, and determine preferred enrollment range—some Project HOPE sites are for children in kindergarten through eleventh grade, while others serve a narrower age range. To identify needs and advocate for additional resources, sites also collect information (enrollment, attendance, and report card grades) about the children who attend programs.

The Project's administrative team, made up of Duke faculty, staff, and work-study students, focuses on mediating interactions among the multiple contexts through which children learn; for example, the Project's liaison coordinator meets regularly with teachers to develop and update an individual student plan (ISP) for each student. The ISP is then modified with the community center site coordinator and staff. Project HOPE's tutoring coordinator shares the ISP, along with suggested teaching strategies, with that child's tutor.

Additionally, a part-time Project HOPE social worker conducts regular seminars on safe and healthy living, and counsels students who have been referred by site coordinators or family members for mental health services or screenings. University and community funds and programs—as varied as a student group dealing with adolescent girls' issues to a local theater offering lessons in piano, dance, and acting—are also made available to the sites.

In designing an evaluation model, we determined that an outcomes-based logic model[1] would be most appropriate for our community-based settings and for the complexity created by multiple contexts. For the internal evaluation, data are collected on student

continued on page 19

[1] A logic model illustrates how an initiative's activities connect to the outcomes it is trying to achieve.

Learning Is Everyone's Business: Learning Supports in Iowa

On behalf of their partners in the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development, Linda Miller and Carol Behrer describe a statewide interagency collaboration to coordinate educational policies, practices, and programs, and show how policy can serve as a tool for linking the contexts in which youth develop.[1]

No community ought to be satisfied until all its young people are healthy and successful in school, enjoying equal opportunity to grow into productive citizens. We therefore need cohesive, research-based efforts that engage schools and communities in collaboratively promoting the healthy development of all children. Partner agencies in the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD), a state interagency partnership designed to better align policies and programs on youth-related issues, all share the goals of helping youth attain social competence, health, and school success, as well as benefit from the support of families, schools, and communities, in preparation for productive adulthood. Since 1999, ICYD has promoted the use of positive youth development principles in state policies and programs throughout Iowa.[2]

The ICYD has developed a results framework to focus and facilitate the work of its partner agencies and of several youth-related endeavors it is developing. One of those endeavors is Learning Supports, ICYD's first comprehensive, multi-agency effort. This effort targets the school success component of ICYD's mission. Spearheaded by the Iowa Department of Education, Learning Supports is designed to address how schools and communities can work together to ensure that "all Iowa youth are successful in school."[3]

Learning Supports is built on the belief that each partner's contribution to students' health, social competence, and preparation for adulthood, as well as to students' family, school, and community contexts, can help remove barriers that impede learning. Such efforts should form a comprehensive, cohesive system that wraps supports around teachers and the classroom by addressing the diverse needs and barriers to learning faced by the state's children and families. Services offered through Learning Supports range from universal programs for all youth to more targeted interventions for those at risk or with intense and complex needs.

In 2003 a design team, with input from a broad array of stakeholders and consultation from national experts, formulated a logic model[4] detailing the guiding principles, desired short- and long-term outcomes, and intended results for Iowa's students. The team subsequently developed a prototype of the system to be used for achieving those outcomes. The initial Learning Supports prototype, currently in use, consists of (a) a set of long-term results and measures; (b) a cohesive intervention framework to help create a full continuum of services—for example, instructional supplements, supportive learning environments, youth involvement, family support and involvement, and community partnerships; (c) an infrastructure connecting multiple systems and multiple levels within systems; (d) alignment of learning supports–related policies; and (e) capacity building at all system levels.[5]

Capacity building in Iowa's local education agencies currently is in the early phase of implementation, focusing on comprehensive planning and infrastructure development. In the second year, the methods and tools developed will be tested in several school–community sites. Lessons learned during Learning Supports' early implementation phase will inform scale-up to other communities throughout the state.

Evaluation is an integral part of all phases of the Learning Supports effort. Of particular interest in these early evaluations are questions about what it takes to move a coordinated agenda throughout the state and how this process differs in communities with different levels of regional support. In addition to these process questions, student outcomes will be tracked. The ultimate question for the evaluation to answer is whether creating and implementing comprehensive, cohesive systems of learning supports will positively impact indicators of school success and what are the system factors that significantly contribute to that success.

All ICYD partners believe that their joint work will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Iowa's services for children and youth, and yield reciprocal benefits for all partner agencies and their respective missions. Making changes within and across systems to re-orient traditional approaches toward a common, agreed-upon set of results is a daunting prospect. Success will be measured by changes ensuing from the will to modify or eliminate ineffective practices and embark on new, improved ones. If the Learning Supports endeavor accomplishes its goal of improved student learning, it may provide a model for future collaborative work focused on other results areas pertaining to the healthy development of Iowa's youth.

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[1] For more information on the Learning Supports initiative, contact Linda Miller; for more on ICYD, contact Carol Behrer. Contact information for both authors appears at the end of this article.

[2] Among ICYD's state-level partners, each of which also works with and through regional and local entities, are the Departments of Public Health, Education, Human Services, Workforce Development, Economic Development, and the Office of the Governor.

[3] This goal is one of the primary results targeted by ICYD. For more information on the full set of targeted results see: Iowa Department of Education. (2004). Developing our youth: Fulfilling a promise, investing in Iowa's future. Des Moines, IA: Author. smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/iowasystemofsupport.pdf

[4] A logic model illustrates how an initiative's activities connect to the outcomes it is trying to achieve.

[5] This prototype is discussed in greater detail in the concept paper mentioned in footnote 3.

Technology Goes Home: Connecting Families, Communities, and Schools

Kelly Faughnan from HFRP describes a program that connects families and schools in the Boston area through the mechanism of technology.

Technology Goes Home (TGH) is a technology education initiative based in Boston. Sponsored by the Boston Digital Bridge Foundation and the Office of the Mayor, TGH has offered, since 1999, a 10-week, 40-hour computer training course to children and parents in low-income neighborhoods. The program has an ambitious set of goals:

- Bridging the digital divide
- Bringing family members closer together
- Strengthening low-income communities
- Improving students' academic achievement
- Increasing adults' employment skills
- Connecting parents to their children's schools

TGH helps adults prepare for employment opportunities by improving computer skills, and helps children take advantage of home computing to improve schoolwork. Through Neighborhood Technology Collaboratives, which are coalitions of community-based organizations, the program is offered in six low-income neighborhoods throughout the city. The coalitions are responsible for recruiting families, hosting the course, providing computer laboratory space, and ensuring ongoing support to families after the program ends.[1]

The course is available only to families that do not have a computer at home. Parents and their children must participate as teams and must attend every class together. The program's curriculum covers a broad range of topics, including computer assembly and setup, basic operations, word processing, Internet and email use, and troubleshooting. The curriculum also features a review of career opportunities in technology.

Low-cost computers have been especially produced for course participants, in part through donations of software and hardware from major technology producers such as Microsoft, Lexmark, and Intel. After completing the course, graduating families can purchase from TGH their own home computers, software, printers, and Internet service, with the help of a special loan program sponsored by Bank of America. Of the 1,400 families that have graduated from the program to date, 35% of the adults report acquiring a new or better job and 90% say their child's schoolwork has improved.

The success of TGH led to the development of TGH@school, a school-based program for the families of fourth graders, initially piloted in 2003. Now in its third year, TGH@school has expanded to serve 20 Boston elementary and middle schools during the out-of-school time hours.

TGH@school is similar to its parent program, with the exception that the course is taught by the child's fourth grade classroom teacher and the curriculum is aligned with students' schoolwork. Parents of those enrolled in TGH@school also learn how to use the Boston Public School's Web portal, MyBPS, to stay in contact with their child's teacher. Through MyBPS parents can access their children's classroom assignments and announcements, and resources posted by the teacher. Thus far TGH@school has helped enhance family involvement in children's education, with over 80% of parents reporting that they have developed a stronger relationship both with their child's teacher and with the school in general.

The Center for Social Policy at the McCormack Graduate School, at the University of Massachusetts, conducted a multiyear evaluation of both the community- and the school-based version of TGH. Evaluation methods included site observations, focus groups with providers, and pre and postprogram participant skills assessments and feedback questionnaires. Findings[2] show positive outcomes in both skill development and family and community strengthening. Participants say that relationships—within their own families and with other families, as well as their connections to the community—improved after participating in the program.

For more information about Technology Goes Home and the Boston Digital Bridge Foundation go to www.digitalbridgefoundation.org.

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MyBPS Home Connection

MyBPS, the new intranet portal for the Boston Public School District (BPS), improves communication across the entire BPS community: teachers, administrators, students, and families. The portal serves as a tool to provide and document professional development for staff, retrieve and analyze data to assess student learning, facilitate the identification of best practices in instruction, support the sharing and alignment of resources, and connect families and communities to student learning. The Home Connection, an emerging feature of MyBPS, is currently being piloted by teachers and families in the TGH@school program. By logging in to their child's classroom from home, parents can view a calendar of homework assignments, access students' work and test scores, and communicate with teachers. Teachers can also post announcements and provide parents with resources related to homework assignments.

[1] Across the six neighborhoods, 65 community-based organizations belong to a Neighborhood Technology Collaborative.

[2] University of Massachusetts Center for Social Policy. (2003). Technology Goes Home evaluation: Executive summary. Boston: Author. Available at www.mccormack.umb.edu/csp/csp_evalprojects.jsp.

Engaging Families in Out-of-School Time Programs

Zenub Kakli and Holly Kreider, from HFRP, together with Tania Buck of BOSTnet and Caroline Ross of the United Way of Massachusetts Bay, illustrate how family engagement practices and programs can link the out-of-school time, school, and home contexts by fostering communication, respect, and networking among staff and families.[1]

Evaluation research suggests that engaging families in out-of-school time (OST) programs can improve program outcomes, adult–child relationships, and family involvement in schooling. Yet most OST programs lack a structured family involvement component, in part because programs face many challenges in involving families, such as linguistic differences, lack of program funds, and parents' busy work schedules.[2]

Through OST programs, the Engaging Families Initiative (EFI)[3] aims to increase family involvement, engagement, and leadership in children's informal learning and academic achievement. Lead EFI collaborators—BOSTNet and the United Way of Massachusetts Bay (UWMB)—have partnered with nine OST program sites in greater Boston primarily serving Black and Latino children ages 6–10. EFI provides these programs with coordinator cohort trainings, research on best practices and successful models, individual technical assistance, initiative-wide events, and connections with local resources.

In their efforts to distill and disseminate lessons from their work, EFI partners have teamed up with Harvard Family Research Project to produce a guide for OST professionals on how to engage families.[4] Site visits and review of evaluation data have already yielded preliminary lessons:

- Engage families in a variety of ways. EFI coordinators talk to parents about children's progress at parent meetings, at pick-up time, and over the phone. Parents also benefit from workshops and events highlighting strategies to support children at home. Some program staff accompany parents to school meetings, strengthening the linkages between home, school, and programs. Trips to museums and theatres appeal to parents seeking enrichment opportunities, while math and literacy workshops appeal to parents who want support for helping their children with homework. A range of activities and strategies helps programs reach more parents.
- Emphasize relationships and respect. EFI leaders and program coordinators often speak of the value they place on community, care, and relationships. Some staff describe how prioritizing families' needs and showing parents respect can facilitate the partnerships between families and programs. For example, one program holds parent workshops on pursuing college and provides a listening ear to parents facing personal challenges. A genuine understanding of and commitment toward families serves as a starting point for effective family engagement strategies and represents a broadened view of meeting children's needs.
- Be part of a network that supports OST programs. Programs affiliated with EFI gain from its structure and support system; they also receive up to $10,400 a year from the Wallace Foundation, distributed through the UWMB, to offset the cost of materials, equipment, and staffing. Program coordinators meet nearly every month with EFI's project director to discuss topics ranging from effective communication with families to developing parent leaders. These meetings are convened by BOSTnet, which also plans meeting topics. Representatives from EFI also visit affiliated programs to help address challenges and offer suggestions for improving program operations. Program coordinators have voiced their appreciation of the EFI network as a source of new ideas to implement at their own sites.
- Evaluate family engagement efforts in OST programs. The Intercultural Center for Research in Education is evaluating EFI. The Center has interviewed program directors and parents to assess what programs are doing to engage families, how often, and how well. Parents were asked about their satisfaction with the program and about their suggestions for program improvement. The evaluation findings are being used to inform EFI program activities and grantseeking pertaining to family engagement, development of the OST guide mentioned above, and other OST initiatives and future investments by UWMB and BOSTNet.

A parent in one EFI program expressed the mutual benefits of engagement when she described the program as "a family" where people have been able to relax and develop respectful relationships with one another. This parent has been involved in the program since its beginning and volunteers as the program's bookkeeper. She is so committed that she plans to continue volunteering even after her son stops attending the program.

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[1] To learn more about BOSTNET and the United Way visit their respective websites: www.bostnet.org and www.uwmb.org.

[2] James, D. W., & Partee, G. (2003). No more islands: Family involvement in 27 school and youth programs. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum. www.aypf.org/publications/nomoreisle/index.htm

[3] The Engaging Families Initiative is funded by the Wallace Foundation as part of its Parents and Communities for Kids initiative. www.uwmb.org/ourwork/efi.htm

[4] The guide will be available in winter 2005 and will highlight other strategies, lessons, and stories for engaging families in OST programs. To request a copy in advance, provide HFRP with your mailing address by emailing hfrp_pubs@gse.harvard.edu or calling 617-496-4304.

A conversation with

Richard Rothstein

Richard Rothstein is a research associate at the Economic Policy Institute and a visiting lecturer at Teachers College, Columbia University. From 1999 to 2002 he was the national education columnist for The New York Times and is now a senior correspondent for The American Prospect. Rothstein authored the 2004 book Class and Schools: Using Social, Economic, and Educational Reform to Close the Black–White Achievement Gap (published by the Economic Policy Institute), which argues that narrowing the achievement gap requires substantial changes in social policy in addition to extensive school reform.[1]

Q Your book Class and Schools argues that closing the achievement gap cannot be accomplished by school reform alone. On what do you base your argument?

A What children achieve academically is the product not only of what they learn in school, but of a wide variety of factors, including home and neighborhood influences, and social and economic conditions. My book attempts to help explain the concrete ways in which these influences affect learning.

One of the most important ways in which social-class differences affect how children learn, for example, is parenting style. Much research has demonstrated that parents from different social classes have different conversational styles, ways of relating, and intellectual engagement with children. The best-known study on this comes from Betty Hart and Todd Risley in their book Meaningful Differences.[2] After observing families of different social classes, Hart and Risley found a number of significant class-related differences. For example, toddlers whose parents had professional occupations heard an average of 2,000 words per hour, while children with working-class parents heard an average of 1,300 words; and children with parents on welfare heard an average of 600 words. These differences are meaningful because the extent to which parents converse with and in the presence of their children impacts children's vocabularies and literacy levels.

Children will do better in schools where teachers are better prepared, with higher expectations, and where the curriculum is better. But improving our schools alone won't fully close the achievement gap, as children from middle-class families will continue to have advantages outside of school that put them ahead of their lower-class peers.

[1] Other recent books include the following: Carnoy, M., Jacobsen, R., Mishel, L., & Rothstein, R. (2005). The charter school dust-up: Evaluating the evidence on enrollment and achievement. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute; and Carnoy, M., Benveniste, L., Carnoy, H., & Rothstein, R. (2002). All else equal: Are public and private schools different? New York: Routledge.

[2] Hart, B., & Risley, T. R. (1995). Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young American children. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Q What do you recommend as essential for closing the achievement gap?

A Our priority should be providing high quality early childhood programs for children of all social classes. Preschool for all 4-year-olds is a start, but not sufficient, because gaps show up by age 3. Children's cognitive abilities begin to differentiate early in life, based in part on the amount of intellectual stimulation they receive in the home and in child care.

The second important area is health. While health disparities in our society are well documented, many don't recognize the extent to which they influence children's academic achievement. Consider vision as an example. Low-income children come to school with twice the rate of vision problems as middle-class children—many children can't read simply because they can't see. Also, several years ago the Surgeon General concluded that low-income children have untreated dental cavities at three times the rate of middle-class children.

> Academic achievement is the product of schools and social institutions and families. School, though part of the solution, is not the only solution.

You may wonder what this has to do with student achievement, but consider that children who are in discomfort—whether from a toothache or for some other reason—are going to pay attention less well, on average, than children who are not in discomfort. Children will not learn if they are absent or distracted by health problems. In this instance it does not matter how qualified teachers are or how good the curriculum. To begin narrowing the achievement gap we need to address the nonschool factors that cause learning differences between low-income and middle-class children.

Conventional wisdom has it that schools fail minority children, and there is little doubt that schools could do a better job. But rarely recognized is that minority children actually learn more in school than middle-class children do. Our only reliable national test, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, shows Black students' reading scores rising more from fourth to eighth grade than Whites' scores. The big achievement gap is due partly to disadvantaged children starting out in school already far behind. Also, they get less educational support in summers and after school.

This observation has been confirmed by tests given to children in the spring and again the following autumn. These tests show that during summer, disadvantaged children's scores fall, while middle-class children forget less of what they have learned. This differential "summer setback" occurs partly because middle-class children's learning is reinforced in the summer months—they read more, travel, and learn new social and emotional skills in camp and organized athletics. It is reasonable to think that differences in out-of-school opportunities also exacerbate the achievement gap.

So another effective approach to narrowing the achievement gap would be to offer after school and summer programs that provide academic support as well as cultural, athletic, and organizational experiences for disadvantaged children. Only about one in five low-income children presently participate in after school programs.

Q How do you respond to critics who say your argument offers an excuse for educators not to try harder?

A My argument does not provide an excuse for poor performance. Rather, my point is that schools do make a difference, but so do a range of other factors. Academic achievement is the product of schools and social institutions and families. School, though part of the solution, is not the only solution.

Currently, our national education policy expects something we cannot possibly achieve if schools alone are seen as responsible for student achievement. Our national goal is that all social-class differences in education outcomes will disappear by the year 2014. However, when 2014 arrives and gaps have not disappeared, we will judge that schools have failed. Policies will follow from that judgment. But most of these policies will not work, because we will have made an incorrect diagnosis of the problem and therefore formulated an incorrect or incomplete treatment as a solution.

Q Is coordinating schools and other nonschool supports important in addressing the achievement gap?

A Yes. Coordination is very important. But before we can do much better in this regard, we have to start with the fact that early childhood programs, health clinics, and after school and summer programs do not exist in sufficient numbers in the first place. They have to exist before they can be coordinated.

Consider a commonplace health problem: earaches. Many children get earaches. When middle-class children get them, they go to their pediatricians, who administer antibiotics or other treatments. But the number of pediatricians in low-income communities is generally low, so for low-income families without access to pediatricians, the only option is to go to an emergency room. Yet most will not go to the emergency room for an earache. As a result many children suffering from earaches are inattentive in school. Unless we create incentives that bring pediatricians to low-income communities, we cannot coordinate doctors with schools, because the doctors simply do not exist in sufficient numbers in those communities.

Once pediatricians come to low-income communities, there should be full coordination between physicians and schools. Teachers should notify doctors of key problems, and they ought to be able to consult with a physician to understand the underlying cause of a problem. However, we are far from that point. We need to think first about how to provide these services, then about how to provide them in such a way that programs and schools are coordinated.



Richard Rothstein

Q What additional research or evaluation is needed to further explore the solutions you offer?

A We definitely need more research in this field. We are so focused on schools being the sole determinants of child outcomes that we spend very little time investigating the ways other institutions and social forces interact. In the early childhood arena, for instance, much of the advocacy for programs is, in this country, based on the Perry Preschool Project,[3] which involved only one program with only 120 children. It was a powerful experiment, one that followed children until they reached age 40, but we should have done more of this kind of research with different kinds of programs.

The Perry program included a major parent education component; it is reasonable to think that the parenting component was an important part of its success. But I would like to see research on a dozen of these kinds of programs—with differing components, tracking children until they are 20 years old or more. We then can see if outcomes are different with programs that had the presence or absence of specific components. Social policy in this nation should be based on a much larger research base than is currently available.

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[3] Visit the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation website for more information on Perry Preschool Project research: www.highscope.org.

Studying Contextual Predictors of Participation in Out-of-School Time Activities

In describing a new study by HFRP, Holly Kreider illustrates how research and data can illuminate and facilitate links between complementary-learning contexts.

Young people spend their nonschool hours in a variety of ways—with family, in community settings, and in out-of-school time (OST) programs and extracurricular activities. Evidence suggests that participation in OST activities can produce many measurable positive effects for youth, academically, socially, and behaviorally.[1] OST programs and activities also complement the school day in a number of ways: They promote academic achievement and adjustment; provide opportunities such as arts, music, and other pursuits not available in school; and expose young people to more hands-on, project-based learning.

Yet little information exists, especially for youth at risk, on the factors that contribute to getting youth "in the door" and keeping them engaged. What predicts youth participation in OST programs and activities? How do other contexts, for example, families, schools, and neighborhoods, influence whether youth participate in such activities, and how can this information be used to inform practice?

Adopting an Ecological Framing

Harvard Family Research Project has received a 2-year grant from the William T. Grant Foundation to support a quantitative study of the contextual predictors of participation in OST activities. The study is grounded in a social–ecological conceptual framework, which emphasizes the multiple and interrelated contexts within which children develop.[2] By honoring the many settings within which children learn and the linkages across these settings, this theoretical orientation reflects a complementary-learning approach. Our main research questions reflect this orientation:

1. What are the child, family, school, and neighborhood predictors of participation? Also of particular interest to our research team and to the field is the question of whether disadvantaged youth are less likely to have access to or participate in OST activities.
2. How do child, family, school, and neighborhood characteristics interact to predict participation in OST activities? (E.g., are the predictors of participation different for youth from different family backgrounds?)

Investigating Multiple Datasets

To address these complex questions, HFRP is conducting secondary data analyses on two national datasets: the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, Child Development Supplement, and the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988. These datasets will allow us to examine links between the multiple contexts within which children develop, because each study contains rich information about youth's families, schools, and communities. These datasets also include detailed OST activity measures that will allow us to examine multiple dimensions of participation, such as intensity and duration. They also provide the opportunity to focus on youth and contexts that are commonly underrepresented in the literature, including poor and minority children and their school and neighborhood contexts.

Informing Complementary-Learning Practices and Policies

A main goal of the study is to inform practice and policy by providing critical information about predictors of participation. Specifically, the study findings will do the following:

- Address a growing demand from the policy community for rigorous research and allow policymakers to better target interventions for specific populations.
- Identify barriers to participation that could inform social and welfare policies to better foster youth participation in OST activities.
- Help program staff identify barriers to participation, especially for at-risk youth, and inform development of recruitment strategies.
- Enable programs to understand who is and isn't participating in OST activities and why, thereby facilitating the development of programs that fill important service-delivery gaps at the community level.

Built into our study design is an interactive communications strategy that encourages a two-way flow of information between researchers, practitioners, policymakers, advocates, and others invested in improving programs and policies for young people. One communications tactic will be to disseminate and market study findings electronically.[3] We will also target multiple audiences with publications in a variety of formats, including academic articles, research-to-practice briefs, and conference presentations. We will conduct outreach to practitioners and researchers, not only to convey our findings but to learn about how our work can be most useful. We will use this information to shape the direction of investigation and the delivery of our results. In this spirit, we invite feedback from readers on how the study can be most useful to their own practice.

Holly Kreider

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[1] Little, P. M. D., & Harris, E. (2003). A review of out-of-school time program quasi-experimental and experimental evaluation results. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project. Available at www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/resources/snapshot1.html.

[2] Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[3] To be kept updated on the progress of this project, readers can subscribe to our out-of-school time updates email at www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/subscribe.html.

Increasing the Bottom Line by Supporting Families

Lynn Mitchell, from Corporate Voices for Working Families, describes how businesses can promote policies and practices that support working families, using partnerships between private and public sectors.

The day-to-day challenges working families face represent a high cost to the business bottom line. To reduce these costs, many American corporations invest in supports for working families that increase workforce retention, productivity, and loyalty. However, businesses have learned that, despite these investments, they cannot individually address all the issues faced by working families: significant new action and partnerships are required.

Corporate Voices for Working Families is a nonpartisan, nonprofit coalition of 50 leading corporations that builds bipartisan public- and private-sector support for policies that strengthen working families. Corporate Voices supports innovative and sustainable solutions to working-family issues by (a) promoting family-friendly workplace practices; (b) communicating the value of investments in working-family policies; (c) bridging public, private, and nonprofit sectors on these policies; (d) providing a forum for learning, partnership, and networking; (e) demonstrating a commitment to corporate citizenship; and (f) tracking emerging policy trends and their impact.

Supporting Families Through Policy

The business case for investments in children—both in terms of early learning and after school care—has not been articulated clearly in either federal or state policy discussions. In today's world, however, where education and skill levels determine future earnings, the costs of not taking action on these issues are far too great to ignore. Corporate Voices adds to these discussions by developing policy statements that convey the importance of investments in children from a business perspective.[1]

Corporate Voices' first policy statement, Early Childhood Education: A Call to Action From the Business Community, released in partnership with the Business Roundtable,[2] recognizes that the education of young children is both a business issue and a family concern, and exemplifies how a coalition representing a unique business voice, along with workplace supports, can influence policy and practice. The statement contains a set of six principles for successful early childhood programs (see the box). Principles are being used to assess existing early childhood programs, consider philanthropic priorities, evaluate early childhood policy proposals (e.g., preschool, Head Start), and formulate policy positions.

Corporate Voices' second policy statement, After School for All, outlines the critical role high quality after school programs play in increasing chances of success in both school and life, and contains recommendations for policy initiatives that will create quality after school systems.[3]

Supporting Families Through Practice

To encourage replication and promote sound business policies—which often apply in the public sector—Corporate Voices shares, with policymakers and the greater business community, best practices on creative solutions to the needs of working families. Bank of America, for example, offers a program for low-to-moderate income employees that reimburses costs incurred for child care. The program, Child Care Plus, helps employees pay for various forms of child care by reimbursing a portion of the costs for each child receiving care. Child Care Plus began in 1989 in response to an employee study that discovered a strong link between turnover and child care issues. Due to the scope of child care assistance, Bank of America spends 80% of its work/life budget on this initiative. Since the program's inception, Bank of America's human resources staff has reported that Child Care Plus has had a positive impact on employee retention and productivity, because parents are less preoccupied with child care matters.

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Corporate Voices for Working Families' Early Childhood Education Policy Principles

Early childhood education plays a crucial role in bridging the performance gap between children from lower socioeconomic groups and their wealthier counterparts. Successful early childhood education systems emphasize the following principles (principles are not listed in order or according to priority):

1. Learning—viewing children's learning as the central mission
2. Standards—articulating standards for children's learning and program quality that align with state K–12 academic standards
3. Teachers—ensuring teaching staffs have the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to help young children enter school prepared to succeed
4. Parents—supporting parents as their children's first teachers and providing those who choose to enroll their children with high quality program options
5. Accountability—embracing accountability for measurable results
6. Partnerships—building cross-cutting partnerships to govern, finance, sustain, and improve the system

[1] Other Corporate Voices focus areas are elder care, the way we work, and family economic stability.

[2] The Business Roundtable, an association of chief executive officers from 150 major companies committed to public policy, cultivates vigorous economic growth and a dynamic global economy. www.businessroundtable.org

[3] Both policy statements are available on the Corporate Voices website: www.cvworkingfamilies.org.

Investing in Connections

Foundation executives discuss their efforts to connect the many contexts in which children live and learn in order to increase the impact of their investments in these areas.

In their efforts to alleviate complex social problems, foundations increasingly are recognizing the value of developing connections among stakeholders and across sectors that serve children and youth. These sectors include early care and education/school readiness, K–12 education, out-of-school time/youth development, arts and culture, health, child welfare, and community building.

Although foundations try to create these linkages and alignments for a variety of reasons, most of them hope to achieve two main objectives: First, funders hope that by creating a continuum of services and reducing redundancies, they will more effectively serve children and youth. Second, funders use these connections for strategic ends—to leverage support from other investments, partners, and resources.

Recently, with funds from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Harvard Family Research Project asked foundation executives how they are aligning people, organizations, and systems to improve outcomes for children and youth. Below are responses from three executives.

How is your foundation aligning people, organizations, and systems to improve outcomes for children and youth?

Lise Maisano, senior program officer at the S. H. Cowell Foundation, discusses opening lines of communication and finding synergies with place-based grantmaking.

By making grants that support and strengthen their families and neighborhoods, the S. H. Cowell Foundation aims to improve the quality of life of children living in poverty in Northern California. We focus on making complementary, place-based grants in communities where there are opportunities to improve the quality of neighborhood life, family functioning, student success, youth readiness for adulthood, and civic partnerships. Grants are made in four areas: affordable housing, family resource centers, K–12 public education, and youth development.

Our first step in investing in a community is to ask grantees to pull together a tour and a forum to help us understand the community: who its members are, what they do, what their culture is, and what it's like to live there—in other words, what it's like to walk in their shoes. We also ask the communities to bring together all of their partners (i.e., community leaders, other funders, stakeholders in the business community, etc.).

This gathering often represents one of the first times everyone in the community has come together to have a common conversation; it helps the communities to recognize what they have and who they are. The best of them see the meeting as an opportunity to forge deeper relationships and bring in new partners and stakeholders. Previously, in many of these communities, people were either not working together at all or were doing so in a limited way. Even among the few that had deeper relationships prior to our involvement, most had not put much time into trying to figure out how the community's different sectors could work together to achieve a common outcome.



We are looking for synergy, goodwill, and connectedness. We know this doesn't happen overnight—it's messy and it takes time. But we think that if people find common ground in a natural, organic way, these relationships will be more enduring and will make a difference over the long term. We are learning that just continuing to ask people to come together is helping them to have more authentic and productive relationships.

We have been most successful at helping foster connections around outcomes. Going back into the communities and sharing with them what they have told us about what difference is being made is one way of recognizing their power and their achievements. The more that we are invested in a community and share what we are learning with them as part of an ongoing conversation, the more relationships among those communities will deepen, which, in turn, will sustain what they have accomplished.

Terry Mazany, president and chief executive officer of the Chicago Community Trust, reflects on working toward a common goal with systems-level work.

Since 1915 the Chicago Community Trust has been the region's community foundation, aiming to improve the quality of life in Chicago by helping donors manage their charitable giving and making grants in the community. The Trust centers its grantmaking in five areas: arts and culture, basic human needs, community development, education, and health. Our education initiative, which seeks to improve the quality of elementary and secondary education, is a major focus.

The linkages we make are part of an overall agenda to create an extended, enriched learning environment to support low-income children and families in Chicago. To that end, our grantmaking is systemic in nature. Specifically, we promote two types of linkages. The first type is connecting organizations with the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). We actively link agencies on the outside with administrators inside the school system.

For example, when CPS identified literacy as its top priority, we helped them assess the landscape. We found that local universities, while they possessed the intellectual capacity and tremendous expertise needed to teach reading, were underutilized outside of small pilot projects in which a university "adopted" a specific school. In response we created a consortium of six universities to work with a set of schools identified by CPS. We also are building on existing initiatives, such as the Polk Bros. Foundation's community schools model,[1] and creating new initiatives that link individual service providers with schools to extend the learning day.

The second type of linkage is aligning people and organizations around a common goal or set of strategies. For example, in our funding of the Museum of Science and Industry's sci-

[1] For more information on this model visit www.polkbrosfdn.org/future-initiatives-schools.html.

ence programming, we ensure that the museum works with the leaders of the Chicago Math and Science Initiative, so that the museum's programming serves as a resource that complements the school system's core curriculum. We also make sure that the school system's central-office curriculum developers know about this programming, so that they can build it into the curriculum, thereby allowing schools to take advantage of these resources to provide enrichment, extend lessons, and build in practices. We require that curriculum materials be organized around these visits and that postvisit lesson plans be implemented to build off of the experience. We also seek to fund projects that have a training component that helps teachers understand and integrate the value of a museum experience into their lessons.

Additionally, we are addressing the challenges of the early childhood field, which is a patchwork of programs with federal, state, and city funding, all with varying standards and visions for children's academic preparation. We are working with the various agencies to get them all on the same page and aligned with a set of standards so that children can be successful in kindergarten.

Nancy Devine, director of community programs, and Sheila Murphy, senior officer, both of the Wallace Foundation, discuss sharing resources with public or private partnerships.

The Wallace Foundation enables institutions to expand learning and enrichment opportunities for all people by supporting and sharing effective ideas and practices. We fund nationally in three focus areas—communities, arts, and education—each of which is staffed by a team that includes program officers, evaluation/research officers, and communications officers. Our grants in the area of communities focus on out-of-school learning, while our arts grants support participation in the arts; our education grants focus on improved school leadership.

Learning in Communities is a city-based strategy that seeks to redesign local systems of out-of-school learning to make sure that public and private funds are allocated based on standards of quality and learner participation. To date, the strategy has been launched in Providence and New York City with multiyear investments that followed intensive business planning processes. The Wallace Foundation also invests in our other program areas, the arts and school leadership, in these two cities.

We also look for opportunities to connect our work both internally and externally in the cities where we invest. For example, market research in both Providence and New York City affirmed that children and families are hungry for an increased range of arts opportunities in the nonschool hours. As school systems nationwide struggle to meet rising expectations for student achievement, the arts are too often marginalized during the school day, and this increases the need for arts engagement outside of school. From the "arts perspective" research has shown that the people most likely to support and engage in the arts as adults are those who received high quality early exposure. Bringing kids and the arts together outside of school benefits everyone involved.

The need to build better bridges between the in-school and out-of-school hours is also increasingly well understood. Currently, in New York City, Wallace is involved in two major initiatives. The first involves a redesign of the city's overall out-of-school time system led by the Mayor's Office and the Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD). As part of the city's commitment to strengthening the quality of after school programs, DYCD and the New York City Department of Education recently signed an unprecedented agreement to share resources ranging from facilities to training and technical assistance. As the Department of Education implements a citywide curriculum and struggles to improve student achievement, it only makes sense to think about the fact that the after school hours offer a unique forum for providing a wide range of learning opportunities that are tailored to the needs of kids and families.

The other initiative involves the city's three library systems: the Brooklyn, Queens, and New York Public Libraries. Over the next 3 years the libraries will be working to improve the quality and capacity of the various programs they provide for kids of all ages outside of school. To enhance this effort, they, too, are working with the Department of Education on activities that include joint professional development, collection development that supports the school curriculum, and summer reading activities that will help students enhance their skills during these crucial months.

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Beyond the Classroom

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provide "existence proof" that aligning and linking learning contexts and resources is worth serious exploration and investment. We need to look hard at past system-building efforts, examine previous collaborative efforts closely, and apply the lessons from these to "next generation" complementary-learning efforts.[17]

In addition, research and evaluation are needed to better understand which types of connections provide the most benefit and how to improve them once connections are made. Finally, we need to evolve methodologically to embrace the complexity involved in studying complementary-learning efforts that often feature "messy" partnerships and connections that tend to evolve over time. (The box on page 6 provides one such example from the field of public health.) While ideas and techniques gleaned from existing evaluations help us identify the kinds of measures to use and useful tools for evaluating complex initiatives, this is an exciting and challenging area in which the field must continue to evolve; and as we evolve, we must look to other fields to help us understand how evaluation can help guide our understanding and expansion of complementary learning.

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[17] See, for example, our fall 2003 issue on evaluating community-based initiatives: www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/issue23/index.html

Evaluating Partnerships: Seven Success Factors



HFRP asked Dr. Hector Garza, president of the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP), to describe what he looks for when evaluating educational partnerships and their work. While the evaluation design used by NCCEP spans programming, partnership development, strategic planning, and academic outcomes, Dr. Garza shared lessons that can be of use for educators engaged in or establishing K–16 education partnerships. Here, based on his organization's evaluation of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation's ENLACE initiative, he describes seven factors related to the importance of planning, leadership, and partnership development.

Engaging Latino Communities for Education—ENLACE—is a multiyear K–16 initiative funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to help increase the number of Latino students earning high school and college degrees. Thirteen ENLACE sites in seven states[1] are working to narrow the achievement gap between Latinos and other students by improving college preparation, access, retention, and rates of graduation.

In Spanish, the word enlace means to link or to weave. The ENLACE initiative reflects this concept by making partnerships a cornerstone of its work. Community-based partnerships are seen as an essential vehicle for achieving the programmatic and policy changes that can transform education and benefit Latino students. ENLACE partners can include institutions of higher education, elementary and secondary schools, community-based organizations, local businesses, local public agencies, and parents or parent organizations.

We at the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships came to the ENLACE evaluation with a rich background in how to evaluate partnership work. We knew, from our experience and research, that our country has not done well in getting different educational sectors to collaborate, to coordinate programs, and to cooperate with one another to improve educational programs, policies, and practices. Our experience evaluating the ENLACE initiative has added to our knowledge base on what it takes to build effective partnerships to promote college access for Latino students. When evaluating partnerships, we look for seven factors or outcomes, which are described below.

1. Institutional Partners That Link to the Goal

The number of partners in a partnership is not a measure of success. Rather, the more important question is who is in the partnership and what role does each partner play in terms of accomplishing the overall goal. Many can put together great groups of stakeholders, with everyone "at the table." But sometimes we focus so much on the number of people represented that we miss the boat in terms of the real goal, the work of the partnership. While acknowledging the importance of having the right partners at the table, we emphasize the need first to identify what the partnership will do to meet the established goals, and then to decide who to invite to become a partner.

[1] New York, California, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, Florida, and Illinois.

ENLACE partnerships almost always include K–12 and postsecondary educators. For purposes of sustainability, we recommend that partnerships also include businesses. In addition, we find that the involvement of community-based organizations is an important outside lever that helps push schools and institutions to change. In evaluating ENLACE partnerships, we examine who is represented, why they are represented, the role they play, and their level of effectiveness.

2. Evolving Structure and Partners

We also look at how the partnership's structure and membership change over time. We expect the partnership to evolve; if we do not see changes, we suspect something is wrong. Some partners, such as educators, often have a hard time with the ebb and flow of partnership work. However, to create change within a partnership, flexibility must be exercised—effective partnerships require the trust and confidence that will allow partners to come and go as needed.

3. Leadership in Key Positions

When examining a partnership, it is important to consider its leadership and whether that person or group is in the best position to lead effectively and with adequate authority. The answer is not always obvious. We used to think that individuals at the most senior level should be leading partnerships. For example, in educational partnerships, if the university president or superintendent were at the table, we would assume that problems would get solved more quickly and efficiently. But we discovered that while engaging leadership at that level is important, often these leaders are too busy to become engaged in a sustained and committed way, to get truly involved in the work of leading.

With this type of partnership it is critical to have as leader an upper or mid-level manager who also has the ear of the university president or superintendent. Since that person tends to have more time for managing very complicated and messy partnership work, he or she becomes the expert and gets to know the partners well. As a result, that individual is able to keep momentum and energy going and provide the glue needed for the partnership to accomplish its work. At the same time, that individual serves a key role in informing the president or superintendent about what decisions he or she needs to make in order for the partnership's work to be implemented successfully.

4. Inclusive Decision Making

We also look to see whether the partnership is working as a team to make critical decisions. We find that partners very quickly become disenfranchised, disengaged, and uninterested if they feel the same individuals are always making all of the decisions. For example, based on their history, community-based organizations tend to feel distrust in partnerships with educational institutions; while they are at the table, they do not feel like equal partners. Ensuring that the partnership stresses communication and decision making on equal footing is extremely important.

5. Appropriate Governance Structure

A partnership's governance structure also matters. While it is difficult to point to any single governance structure as the "right" model—that depends on the partnership's goal—determining whether the governance structure is working is an important factor in evaluating a partnership and its work and corresponding outcomes. We used to put together governance structures that were very democratic, where everyone came together and had their say. But, ultimately, there was very little order, and progress was slow. While inclusiveness is important, the governance structure of any partnership must be examined to determine whether it functions effectively for the purpose at hand.

For ENLACE, different partnership styles and structures have emerged, again depending on the partnership's goal. One model, called the cooperative service provider model, uses a pyramid structure. Higher education is at the top and assumes an important driving role—not because higher education is the most critical partner, but because the partnership's goal is to improve access to postsecondary education institutions. K–12 is in the middle of the pyramid, and community-based organizations comprise the supporting bottom layer.

Another model is called professional collaboration and features higher education, K–12, and community-based organizations all working together, but with intentional points of strategic intersection. A third model is called community-based collaboration and is more community driven. In this case, higher education and K–12 are intimately involved, but the community-based organization drives the work. This is a more grassroots model where community-based organizations are proactive in helping educational institutions reach out to communities in more constructive ways.

6. Mutually Beneficial Interactions

Partnerships, especially those with diverse partners, should feature mutually beneficial relationships. Partners should interact in ways that benefit individuals and their organizations, as well as contribute to the partnership's overall goal. In Latino communities, for example, community-based organizations—which traditionally assume an educational role, often leading after school or mentoring programs—are often challenged with finding adequately trained or credentialed individuals to staff programs. In ENLACE partnerships, the benefit of bringing K–12 and postsecondary educators together with community-based organizations is that educators can contribute to professional development or to training staff and empowering parents and other community leaders.

By way of example, a university, for instance, can propose to a community-based organization a partnership where graduate students at the university would go and help in the organization's after school program. Partnerships should feature this type of strategic intersection.

7. Decision Making Based on Data

Finally, we look to see that partnerships are using data to make strategic decisions and wise investments. In all partnerships, assessment and evaluation are important—not only to measure impact but also to help ensure that partnerships are both sustainable and strategic in reaching their program goals.

We encourage ENLACE grantees to use data not only to improve programs, policies, and practices but also to create messages that will build the public and political will to sustain the effort long-term. Data are critically important in all partnership work, and, to the extent possible, should be at the center of all decision making.

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Project HOPE

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program attendance, EOG test scores, and report cards. Students, parents, teachers, and staff also complete surveys capturing information about program satisfaction and communication. Twice a year, in January and again in June, a balance card displaying critical data across sites is prepared. The card helps sites evaluate how they are doing in comparison with one another.

These mechanisms provide a consistent feedback loop that allows information to be quickly shared with school and community partners. As a result, Project HOPE community partners have become more active and independent participants in the data collection process. In fact, a long-term goal of this process is to demystify data collection and evaluation procedures for our community partners so that evaluation becomes a more routine part of their program administration.

The external evaluation is conducted in conjunction with North Carolina Central University (NCCU), an historically minority institution, which, like Duke, is studying the university and community engagement process. External reviewers collect monthly reports from each of the community partners and project staff, conduct site observations and interviews, and administer and evaluate a Durham community survey. This information is shared with both Duke and NCCU staff so that the two groups can consult with each other and learn conjointly.

As indicated in the diagram, Project HOPE's collaborative process is circular and continuous. With our partners, we are becoming a community that knows each other better and can regard one another with greater trust. As a community, we can send the consistent message, from our multiple contexts, that each child in Durham is valued and expected to achieve academic and social success.

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Seattle School District's Community Alignment Initiative

Sara Tenney-Espinosa, of the Seattle School District, describes the evaluation goals and early findings from a collaboration between the district and local after school providers.

In the spring of 2001, the Seattle School District invited 31 teams of schools and after school providers to participate in the first phase of its Community Alignment Initiative. Alignment is a framework that guides the way schools, school-based after school programs, families, and communities work collectively to support children's academic pursuits. Initiative partners engage in alignment by jointly coordinating program planning, curriculum, and training. This collaboration better connects after school activities with learning standards and facilitates the integration of the after school program into the school community. In aligning these various spheres, the district hopes to ensure that schools and after school activities together support, in a holistic sense, the developmental needs of children and youth.

Each school–after-school provider team completed an alignment partnership plan that specified how these partners intended to work together to support children's learning. The plans were then reviewed by a multidisciplinary advisory committee. Plans that were approved entitled the after school provider to receive a rent-free lease agreement with the district for program space, with continuation pending demonstration of alignment per an annual evaluation. Currently, all 80 school-based after school programs in the Seattle School District are engaged in alignment. Programs include licensed school-age child care providers, community learning centers, and school-based programs administered by Seattle Parks and Recreation. Programs will develop plans for implementing the initiative in fall 2005.

Expectations for Alignment and Indicators of Success

The Community Alignment Initiative framework is driven by a set of overarching outcome goals, which are linked to related partnership practices and principles, and are measured by specific indicators. The initiative's annual evaluation plan evaluates the following three primary outcome goals: (a) increased success in school, (b) increased developmental assets/protective factors in children's lives, and (c) greater support for children's growth and learning through increased collaboration and communication between the school and after school provider. By focusing on these objectives, the district is better able to articulate the positive impact of alignment for students, schools, and communities, as well as focus on approaches that research suggests significantly contribute to the success of our children.

Early Evaluation Findings

After partial implementation of the Community Alignment Initiative in the spring of 2004,[1] initial findings suggested that, among other positive outcomes, children served regularly by aligned after school programs have increased rates of completing and turning in homework, as well as improved reading and math skills, as measured by school-day teacher surveys, test scores, and grades. In addition, attendance for participating students is greater than that of the general school population. Furthermore, an analysis of suspension rates of participating students suggests that these students are less likely than the general school population to be suspended. It is important to note that these results speak to the Community Alignment Initiative as a whole and do not address whether it is the alignment per se that is related to outcomes. Full implementation of the evaluation plan will occur in the spring of 2005.

Since its inception, the Community Alignment Initiative has served over 20,000 parents and families by providing children with high quality, aligned after school care. A sampling of those served documents parents' perceptions that the after school programs contributed to their children's improvement in reading and math, as well as to an increase in their children's social skills.

Since the quality of the school–after-school provider partnership is critical for successful alignment, we have also attempted to capture information about these parties' level of satisfaction. A sampling of participating schools and their after school partners indicates increased satisfaction with the way teams address key partnership issues, for example, shared use of space, custodial services, staff and volunteers, and materials and supplies. The sampling also indicates increased awareness on the part of the after school program of the learning needs of participating students.

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Core Outputs of Alignment to Date

- Eighty school-based after school providers currently engaged in alignment
- Close to 10,000 children and youth served annually by aligned after school programs
- Over 125,000 hours of additional standards-based instructional time provided each year in the after school hours—often to those children and youth at greatest risk of academic failure
- Over 500 after school program staff and Seattle School District staff trained in how to support learning after school

[1] For a copy of the full 2003–2004 Community Alignment Initiative evaluation report or to find out more about school–after-school partnerships in Seattle, contact the author.

360 Degrees of Literacy: A Look at a Community Partnership in Dallas

Dennie Palmer Wolf and Jennifer Bransom offer lessons from the evaluation of a Dallas-based effort to promote "360-degree literacy" for children, using complementary partnerships between elementary schools and the city's arts and cultural organizations.[1]

"It takes a village to raise a child." In practice that notion often means bringing together a network of providers, each to do their separate work: Families are in charge of behavior, schools are responsible for academics, clinics look after children's health. However, if we really were to build a village, a child's learning (or behavior or health) would necessarily be the concern of many segments of a community. Thus we would be challenged to think, work, and evaluate programs in new ways.

In Dallas, Texas, under the auspices of a new organization, Big Thought (BT),[2] this more integrative kind of thinking is emerging, especially with respect to students' learning. Big Thought oversees an innovative collaboration between the City of Dallas, the Dallas Independent School District (DISD), and the city's arts and cultural organizations. Its work is rooted in the belief that a city's institutions have to join forces to ensure that children receive an education that will foster the next generation of city councillors, entrepreneurs, librarians, artists, and wise parents.

Through BT, each Dallas elementary school receives a common allotment of dollars to purchase the services of artists and education staff from the city's arts and cultural organizations. Technical support teams from BT help principals and teachers select, use, and build on their experiences, thus ensuring that every student has access to the kinds of learning that can occur in theaters, libraries, and science centers.

In the late 1990s, BT realized that for its programs to mature and attract national funding, a major evaluation was in order. Big Thought thus partnered with the Annenberg Institute for School Reform (AISR), an organization that, like BT, insists on a network of civic supports for public education. Following is a brief description of some of the lessons learned through what has become a multiyear partnership.

Lesson 1: Create and Sustain a "Mixed Table"

A common evaluation focus, one that resonated for all partners—the city, the district, the cultural institutions, as well as principals and classroom teachers—had to be identified. To do so AISR staff and BT together created a mixed table, with participants representing each partner. The result was a focus on literacy in the broadest sense: fluency in informational and creative writing, music notation, understanding museum displays, etcetera.

Sustaining this partner discussion has been vital to the evaluation. The initial focus mentioned above has now evolved into the concept of "360-degree literacy," an approach that enhances students' command of the numerous ways of sharing and creating meaning, both within and beyond the classroom.

Lesson 2: Design to Reflect the Partnership

A first step in designing the evaluation was to secure a joint commitment to a longitudinal study, in order to yield substantial outcomes. Next was constructing a design that was respectful of and feasible for schools and classrooms. The evaluation was thus framed as an examination of what teachers can do when they have the support of their city's resources.

The evaluation also had to include a set of measures that "rang true" to the varied partners. These measures included the following:

- District and state accountability measures of reading and writing
- Classroom measures of how student behavior changes when students are working with artists or in arts/cultural settings
- Interviews with students about the work they generate in classroom and partnership lessons
- Diaries in which students record how they use their free time, including the literacy-related activities they engage in outside the classroom

Lesson 3: Create Shared Returns

To ensure that the evaluation helped build capacity for each participating organization, AISR and BT have worked to keep it as participatory and transparent as possible:

- Teachers and principals help design classroom and partnership lessons.
- Observers and interviewers are drawn from the staff of BT and local cultural organizations but are trained by AISR researchers. This process has yielded a much wider understanding of evaluation, as well as an opportunity to look closely at what makes programs effective.
- The DISD Division of Evaluation and Accountability collaborates on data analysis, facilitating discussion about what can be learned from large-scale accountability testing with a complement of classroom measures.

Such multiple-partner evaluations are neither simple nor swift. However, they hold the promise of building citywide coalitions with shared, rather than simply parallel, missions.

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[1] The authors would like to thank the Ford Foundation, the Meadows Foundation, and the City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs for their generous support of this work.

[2] See also: Annenberg Institute for School Reform. (2005). Voices in Urban Education, 7. The topic of this issue of Voices is community-based education; the issue includes another article by and about Big Thought. www.annenberginstitute.org/vue

SPARKing Innovation

Tony Berkley of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation describes the application of a theory of change to a complex initiative to facilitate team learning, strategic management, and program improvement.

Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids (SPARK) is a national initiative involving partnerships of communities, state agencies, and schools in seven states[1] and the District of Columbia. These partners coordinate comprehensive support for quality early learning experiences for children ages 3–6 who are vulnerable to poor achievement. SPARK also helps communities unite resources to better prepare young children for school and to better prepare elementary schools for children.

SPARK grantees work toward three readiness outcomes: (a) improved early care and education, better screenings, and the cultivation of parents and others as learning advocates for children; (b) improved transition and alignment between preschool, kindergarten, and first grade; and (c) mobilization of public will to put children at the center of a seamless continuum for early and elementary education.

The SPARK Theory of Change

A theory of change (TOC) is a plain-language explanation for why programming should work in the real world. More dynamic and more focused than traditional logic models,[2] it is a collective process of interpretation and planning through which variables essential for strategic management are made visible and actionable. These variables include leverage points for systems change, factors critical for success, and pathways to scalability and sustainability. The theory of change is well-suited to long-term, complex initiatives in which design and implementation evolve.

SPARK's theory of change can be described in this way: Effective partnerships and leadership work to align community systems and increase the readiness of children, schools, and communities. The levers of change are therefore partnerships—two distinct collaborations of partners within each SPARK site/state—and an intentional leadership development effort involving key partners who become agents of local, state, and national change.

The theory of change answers basic who, what, where, when, and how questions. As the figure illustrates, Levers of Change tell us that two broad-based coalitions, as well as key leaders, drive alignment strategies at the local community and school levels, and at the larger state level. The arrows leading to and from Alignment Strategies tell us that partnerships and leaders are working in concert through distinct strategies to achieve agreed-upon outcomes. Under Outcomes and Impact, we see what those outcomes are, who is responsible for them, and how they will be achieved. Finally, Scaling reminds us that SPARK is for everyone, not just the 8,000 kids being served. Reading the figure from left to right narrates the pathways through which SPARK will achieve local, state, and national impact.

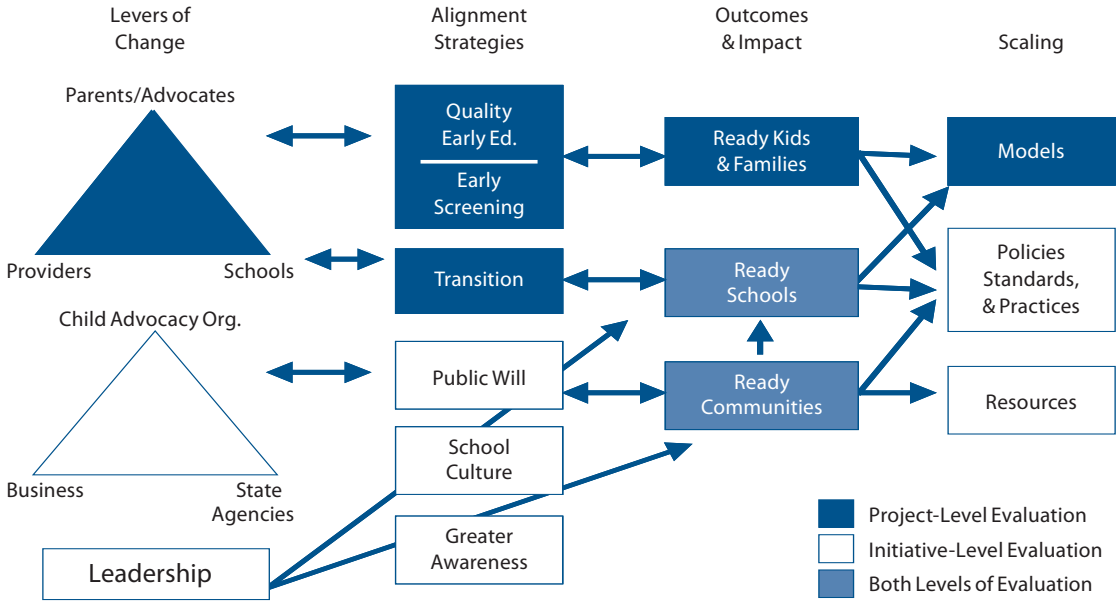
For evaluators, the theory of change is neither a set of commandments nor a standard for measurement. As the initiative unfolds, the TOC helps connect the pieces and integrate far-flung participants into a learning community. This community mani-

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[1] The seven states are North Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Ohio, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Hawaii.

[2] A logic model illustrates how an initiative's activities connect to the outcomes it is trying to achieve.

SPARK Initiative Theory of Change



The 2004 National Awards for Museum and Library Service were recently presented. The winners represent diverse locations and foci, but each has found innovative ways to use resources to address community needs and promote lifelong learning. www.imls.gov/whatsnew/current/031505.htm

Bodilly, S., & Beckett, M. K. (2005). Making out-of-school time matter: Evidence for an action agenda. Santa Monica: RAND. This literature review identifies, frames, and assesses several current issues in out-of-school time, including the extent of program demand, outcomes associated with participation, and research on quality. www.wallacefoundation.org/NR/rdonlyres/D8D935C1-0708-409C-B94F-5C86D9BBE2E0/0/MakingOutofSchoolTimeMatter.pdf

Community focused learning [Special issue]. (2005). Community Schools Online, 4(2). This issue of Community Schools Online, an e-newsletter published by the Coalition for Community Schools, focuses on using the community as a resource for learning, with topics on civic learning, service-learning, and place-based learning, among others. www.communityschools.org/newsletter/newsletterv.4.2.html

Duffet, A., & Johnson, J. (with Farkas, S., Kung, S., & Ott, A.) (2004). All work and no play?: Listening to what kids and parents really want from out-of-school time. New York: Public Agenda. This national survey of teenagers and parents examines support for out-of-school time programs, priorities for families, and differential access among diverse families. www.publicagenda.org/research/research_reports_details.cfm?list=2

The Family Strengthening Policy Center, an initiative of the National Human Services Assembly, is funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and is part of Casey's Making Connections initiative, which aims to improve outcomes for children and families in disadvantaged or isolated neighborhoods by supporting community-based efforts to strengthen family–community connections and promote opportunities within communities to earn a living, build assets, and access reliable services. www.nassembly.org/fspc; www.aecf.org/initiatives/mc

Forum for Youth Investment. (2005, January). When school is out, museums, parks, and libraries are in (Out-of-School Time Policy Commentary No. 9). Washington, DC: Author. This Commentary describes how community museums, parks, and libraries can support youth during the nonschool hours. www.forumfyi.org/Files//OSTPC9.pdf

Hirsch, B. J. (2005). A place to call home: After-school programs for urban youth. New York: Teachers College Press. Drawing on his research with clubs in the Boys and Girls Clubs of America program serving low-income urban youth, Hirsch describes the positive role that after school programs can play, as well as the qualities that lead youth to see such programs as a "second home."

Honig, M. I. (2004). The new middle management: Intermediary organizations in education policy implementation. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 26(1), 65–87. This journal article examines the role of organizations "that operate between policymakers and implementers" in effecting education policy and reform. www.education.umd.edu/EDPA/papers/HONIG_EP_%202004_19.pdf

Judith P. Hoyer Early Childcare and Education Enhancement Program Evaluation. The Maryland Department of Education reports evaluation results for the first Judy Centers, which promote collaborations among community-based agencies and provide comprehensive school-readiness services, including education, health, and family support, to disadvantaged children ages 0–5.

Mahoney, J. L., Larson, R. W., & Eccles, J. S. (Eds.). (2005). Organized activities as contexts of development: Extracurricular activities, after-school and community programs. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. This volume brings together a multidisciplinary group to examine the role of organized activities in child, youth, and early adult development, and includes discussions of empirical research and the policy implications.

Rabin, N., & Redmond, R. (Eds.). (2004). Putting the arts in the picture: Reframing education in the 21st Century. Chicago: Columbia College. This book argues for integrating the arts into school curricula, describing how the arts improve student engagement, school culture, and deeper learning; it includes cognitive research, successful examples, and practical integration strategies. artspolicy.colum.edu/education_book.html

New Resources From HFRP

Lauver, S., & Little, P. M. D. (2005). Finding the right hook: Strategies for attracting and sustaining participation in after-school programs. The School Administrator. This article offers promising recruitment and retention strategies to school administrators seeking to boost participation rates in their school-based after school programs. www.aasa.org/publications/sa/2005_05/contents.htm. The article is adapted from Moving Beyond the Barriers: Attracting and Sustaining Youth Participation in Out-of-School Time Programs, an issue brief from HFRP's Issues and Opportunities in Out-of-School Time Evaluation series. Available at www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/resources/index.html#moving

Weiss, H. B., Kreider, H., Lopez, M. E., & Chatman, C. M. (2005). Preparing educators to involve families: From theory to practice. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. This new book, edited by HFRP, prepares educators to partner effectively with the families of children in elementary school. Using a framework of ecological systems theory, it includes child development theories and teaching cases that reflect critical dilemmas in family–school–community relations, especially among families for whom poverty and cultural differences are daily realities. www.sagepub.com/book.aspx?pid=10625

Weiss, H. B., Little, P. M. D., & Bouffard, S. M. (2005). Participation in youth programs: Enrollment, attendance, and engagement [Special issue]. New Directions for Youth Development, 105. Edited by HFRP, this new issue of New Directions unpacks the construct of participation in out-of-school time programming, posing a three-part equation: participation = enrollment + attendance + engagement. The issue draws on the latest research and evaluation literature and provides research-based strategies on how to define, measure, study, and increase participation. www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/jhome/97015503

School readiness: Closing racial and ethnic gaps [Special issue]. (2005). The Future of Children, 15(1). This issue features articles on the potential causes of achievement gaps, including socioeconomic resources, early childhood education, parenting, and health disparities. www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/Volume_15_No_1.pdf. A webcast of a related conference hosted by the Brookings Institution is also available, at www.futureofchildren.princeton.edu/schoolreadiness/events.asp.

Spielberger, J., Horton, C., & Michels, L. (2004). New on the shelf: Teens in the library. Chicago: University of Chicago, Chapin Hall Center for Children. This report describes evaluation findings from the Public Libraries as Partners in Youth Development Initiative, which aimed to develop innovative models for public libraries to provide educational enrichment and career development programs to underserved youth. www.wallacefunds.org/NR/rdonlyres/B7BFC187-EFCE-4D95-9D86-505DD3F24947/0/NewontheShelf.pdf

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2004). CCDF and 21CCLC: State efforts to facilitate coordination for afterschool programs. Washington, DC: Author. This report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Child Care Bureau describes how states are coordinating funding from the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants program and the Child Care and Development Fund to support after school programs. nccic.org/afterschool/CCDF21CCLC.pdf

SPARKing Innovation

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fests itself in a variety of communication opportunities, including monthly management calls with site directors and foundation staff, annual networking conferences, and a website, www.sparkkids.org.

The SPARK theory of change also is an effective tool for coordinating a two-tiered evaluation effort. The figure's shading helps communicate who is responsible for collecting what and identifies critical points of coordination between evaluators.

One of the most important benefits of SPARK's theory of change is that it provides a framework and common language through which evaluation results can be communicated; for example, annual evaluation reports are guided by questions derived from the theory of change. Undoubtedly, we will learn much about the value of a theory of change over the next 5 years. At the moment it is clear that this new way of working unleashes a spirit of enquiry and boldness, and acknowledges a commitment to continuous learning.

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