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Teacher and Parent Perception of a Middle School After School Tutoring Program

Latisha Monique Jones-Russell
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Education

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Latisha Jones-Russell

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Mary Lou Morton, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty

Dr. Antoinette Myers, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Dr. Marcia Griffiths, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost

Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University

2022

Abstract

Teacher and Parent Perceptions of a Middle School After School Tutoring Program

by

Latisha Jones-Russell

MS, Alcorn State University, 2006

BS, Alcorn State University, 2004

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Walden University

August, 2022

Abstract

The problem in the 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) afterschool program was that 40% of the students enrolled performed below the proficiency level in reading on the state assessed exams during the past 3 school years. This was of great concern for the teachers and administrators in this Title I middle school, Grades 6-8. This qualitative project study aimed to explore, understand, and describe the practices and perceptions of CCLC teachers and parents of students enrolled in the 21st CCLC afterschool program. The conceptual framework was Epstein's partnership model, which proposed that school, family, and community work collaboratively to influence positive academic outcomes for students. The research questions examined teachers' practices and parents' involvement to improve reading achievement for low-performing students enrolled in the CCLC. The primary data sources were semistructured interviews of six certified teachers and six parents. Data analysis using thematic coding revealed that all participants acknowledged worry about state mandated test scores, the importance of improving literacy skills, the use of activities to improve student engagement and recommended more parental involvement in the CCLC. Based on the teacher and parent interviews, the final project was designed for teachers using professional development based on researched-based strategies to improve reading with a focus on improving parent involvement in the CCLC. Positive social change may be realized when quality professional development is implemented to enhance the CCLC staff's knowledge of strategies to improve reading achievement on mandated tests for students enrolled in the CCLC program.

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Dedication

This study is wholeheartedly dedicated to everyone that has been an inspiration to me throughout this journey. I will always appreciate all that you have done.

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Section 1: The Problem

To address the academic needs of low performing students in Title I schools, 21st century community learning centers (CCLCs) were introduced in the United States. The federal government established CCLCs in the last decade to improve achievement for students in low-performing schools (Paluta et al., 2016; Zimmer et al., 2010). If most of the students in a school fail to improve academic achievement for 3 consecutive years, the school must offer afterschool supplementary educational services (SES) for students who need extra academic support. These services are available to improve students' academic performance (Smith et al., 2014). Quality afterschool programs (ASPs) are positively correlated with the child's academic, socioemotional, and behavioral outcomes (Smith & Bradshaw, 2017). The purpose of this qualitative project study was to explore, understand, and describe the practices and perceptions of CCLC teachers and parents of students enrolled in the 21st CCLC ASP. Because many of the students enrolled in the CCLC ASP performed below the proficiency level in reading, in this project study, I sought to understand the practices and perceptions of both teachers and parents of students enrolled in the CCLC ASP.

The Local Problem

The problem in the 21st CCLC afterschool program is that 40% of the students enrolled performed below the proficiency level in reading on the state assessed exams during the past 3 school years. This was of great concern for the teachers and administrators in this Title I middle school (Grades 6-8). The school is a Title I middle school located in a southern state in the United States with a student population of 197, of

which 95% are African Americans. Although the school showed slight gains in reading improvement, the students have not performed up to the state standards set forth by the state. The scores indicated that only a third (33%) of the students met the proficiency level in reading (school administrator, personal communication, March 20, 2017).

According to the Mississippi Alliance for Excellent Education (2015), reading proficiency was only 20% in Mississippi compared to the National Average of 36%.

In the present school district, only 21% of the students performed at or above the national average in 2016. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2015 (22%). After reviewing the data, the school administrator stated reading for informational text was the “worst performing” category. The Mississippi Alliance contended that students need strong literacy skills to succeed in today’s knowledge-based economy, yet, very few eighth-grade students read at a proficient level in Mississippi.

Nearly 5 years ago, the 21st CCLC program was implemented at the local school to help students meet and achieve state and local standards in reading. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2017), the 21st CCLC program provides academic enrichment activities to help students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math. The program supported the creation of community learning centers that provide afterschool learning opportunities for children. (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). These activities are designed to complement students’ regular academic programs.

Because the local middle is a Title I school, every student may attend the ASP for additional academic support. However, the school counselor reported on March 20, 2017

that 90% ($n = 176$) of the student population was enrolled in the ASP, but only 50% ($n = 98$) attended the ASP regularly, 40% attend sporadically, and 10% not at all. Teachers sent reminders to parents and discussed the afterschool tutoring opportunity with parents in parent conferences, but the attendance rate did not increase.

Many direct benefits can be derived from participation in a high-quality ASP, such as improved student attendance, behavior, and academic achievement (Lester et al., 2020). Attendance is a key area of focus in the federal 21st CCLC initiative with more than 6 million children and youth participating in ASPs. Schools are required to submit attendance data annually to the non-profit community action group (CAG) agency whose mission is to improve the socioeconomic well-being of the residents and the students in the ASP (Dodd & Bowen, 2011).

Afterschool programs have also been linked with academic achievement, a way of preventing adverse outcomes and decreasing risks for at-risk youth who attend the programs (Kremer et al., 2015; Mahoney, 2013; Zimmer et al., 2010). The goal of SES programs is to provide children with learning opportunities who otherwise would not receive them at home or during regular school hours. ASPs are instrumental in helping youth gain important skills for the 21st century—that is, learning to solve real-world problems and learning to communicate ideas more clearly (Greene et al., 2013).

Further, ASPs and summer programs serve as positive links for children and families to explore the larger world with appropriate guidance (Greene et al., 2013). Additionally, structured environments provided by ASPs facilitate a variety of activities where students have access to academic and extracurricular resources, such as tutoring,

music, drama, and dance beneficial (Greene et al., 2013; Wickel & Belton, 2016). The goal of local ASPs is to provide children with learning opportunities through after-school tutoring who otherwise would not receive the needed support during regular school hours. Local administrators can use the information gathered from this study to better understand areas in need of improvements. Additionally, this information may help to enhance partnerships with schools, families, and other focused community organizations.

Quality Afterschool Programs

Several elements are essential to a high-quality ASP (Price-Shingles & Place, 2016). These include commitment to learning, constructive use of time, support, social competence, boundaries and expectations, and positive identity. Quality ASPs can help counter and curtail negative activities and behaviors in students, inclusive of peer bullying, and fighting. Additionally, behavior management in afterschool settings is very important (Mahoney, 2013).

As the achievement gap between at-risk students and their more economically advantaged counterparts widens, students need high-quality programs that help facilitate learning and enhance academic achievement. The population of students who can benefit most from quality ASPs is often least likely to be involved (St. Clair & Stone, 2016). Though recognition of this disparity is a crucial first step, there is a strong need for more research regarding strategies and ways to ensure that all students, not just in rural Mississippi, have access to high-quality ASPs.

Rationale

The problem in the 21st CCLC ASP is that 40% of the students enrolled performed below the proficiency level in reading on the state assessed exams during the past 3 school years. Drawing from the related literature and the identified local problem, this project study sought to identify solutions to the problem and explored ways to improve the CCLC program at the local middle school. As a middle school counselor and testing coordinator, the present study helped to extend my knowledge and understanding of the issues of the CCLC program and understand how both teachers and parents can contribute to the academic achievement and future success of the students enrolled.

In a broader context, given the current negative academic and behavioral outcomes facing at-risk youth, such as academic grades, substance use, and absenteeism, ASPs are important for individuals with low academic achievement (Kremer et al., 2015). In a survey of 21st CCLC administrators, 93.6% of CCLC centers set academic improvements as a goal; however, only 15.4% of CCLC centers meet this goal (Kremer et al., 2015). Similarly, 68% of CCLC centers set school attendance as a central goal, but only 27.8% of centers met the stated goal.

The importance of family, school, and community partnerships is also understated. An increasing number of ASPs have been developed to support and sustain relationships with families and community-based organizations (Finn-Stevenson, 2014). The key premise is that schools cannot be successful if they function alone in their quest to educate the nation's youth. The premise is that schools must work with families in the context of the community. This study will draw upon information learned from the

teachers and parents and seek practical ways to bring together teachers and families. Research is important to provide insight into understanding educational parenting behaviors and to gain a better understanding of these parenting practices (Bhargava & Witherspoon, 2015).

In addition to efforts aimed at improving understanding of the CCLC instructional practices, this study was important to create a healthy learning environment for students. The findings may provide relevant information for stakeholders who are undertaking similar CCLC efforts to understand the implementation and successful practices in other ASPs. In sum, the purpose of this qualitative project study was to explore, understand, and describe the practices and perceptions of CCLC teachers and parents of students enrolled in the 21st CCLC afterschool program in the southern United States. The focus was exploring teachers' perceptions of the CCLC program and parental involvement in the program. There is evidence that schools nationwide face significant challenges as they prepare youths for the future in a globalized economy (Paluta et al., 2016). It is well documented that achievement gaps exist across different demographic groups in the United States (Paluta et al., 2016). However, more research is needed to explore and understand how teachers and parents can work together to help students close the achievement gap.

Definition of Terms

The following terms in this section are related to this body of research and will be used throughout the study.

21st CCLC Program: Under Title IV, Part B: A supplemental program founded to help students recognize their ability and learn new skills in an after school setting (Cross et al., 2009), which was designed to provide academic support, enrichment, and safety (Farrell et al., 2019).

Parental involvement: Parenting practices that parents may use to boost the academic performance of their children. Predictor and mediator for students' academic achievement (Doi et al., 2020; Farooq & Asim, 2020; Gangolu, 2019).

Supplemental educational services (SES): Services reauthorized by the NCLB available to all low-income students, especially in reading, mathematics, and language skills (Coppus, 2008; Jones, 2015).

Significance of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative project study was to explore, understand, and describe the practices and perceptions of CCLC teachers and parents of students enrolled in the 21st CCLC afterschool program. In keeping with the purpose, this study is significant to address the practices and issues that teachers and parents of CCLC face in their quest to meet the academic needs of low-performing students and the CCLC goals, which in turn will allow ideas for the project to emerge. Like many CCLC programs, students often come to school from diverse backgrounds, with different experiences, and socioeconomic conditions. It is not always known what happens before and after school in the child's life. These events can be as important as what happens during the school day. The hope is that this study will lead to recommendations for improvement in the

quality of instruction and increase parents' participation in their children's education through effective collaboration with the teachers and the CCLC.

Central to studying this problem is the enhancement of middle school academic achievement for low-performing students in a rural middle school in southern Mississippi. The outcome of the study is significant as schools must find and retain dedicated, high-quality teachers to navigate and lead afterschool programs. A teacher has the potential to impact student learning and attendance more than any other factor including the quality of after-school programs. Additionally, parents are in a unique position to encourage their children to attend afterschool tutoring and extracurricular activities (Cunningham & Tate, 2010). The findings of this study led to the development of this project. More importantly, this project study can provide valuable data and insight into sustaining and improving services provided by the CCLC for students.

Research Questions

The following research questions form the basis of this project study:

- RQ 1: How do teachers of the CCLC afterschool program describe their practices to improve reading achievement for low-performing students?
- RQ 2: How do parents of students enrolled in CCLC describe their involvement to improve reading achievement for low-performing students?
- RQ3: How do teachers and parents describe efforts to collaborate to improve reading achievement for students enrolled in CCLC?

Research questions are matched to interview questions in Appendix C.

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this qualitative project study was to explore, understand, and describe the practices and perceptions of CCLC teachers and parents of students enrolled in the 21st CCLC ASP. The primary phenomenon of this study is a federally funded ASP designed to provide academic support and enrichment for students in a low-resource community. Although several earlier studies addressed ASPs quantitatively (Ardoin & Christ, 2009; Cross et al., 2009), limited qualitative studies were found to explore both teachers' and parents' perceptions of a CCLC program's effectiveness and their role in implementing and encouraging their students to fully participate. As such, this project fills this gap and contributes to practice by addressing three research questions.

The review of the literature begins with a discussion of the conceptual framework followed by a discussion of a review of the broader problem. The framework for this project study was established based on three key elements of the Epstein parental involvement model: (a) communication, (b) collaboration with the community, and (c) voluntary assistance. Using this framework provided insight to address the research questions that explore the perceptions of teachers and parents of students enrolled in CCLC and their efforts to collaborate to improve reading achievement for students enrolled in CCLC

The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the project study was Epstein's (2010) partnership model, which suggests that school, family, and community work collaboratively to influence positive academic and learning outcomes for students. Offering a family

involvement program is a typical approach for helping students at risk for emotional and behavioral disorders (Baek & Bullock, 2015). Many aspects of parental involvement were reported in the literature. One of the most comprehensive frameworks was the work of the Epstein model of parental involvement.

Epstein (2010) categorized parental involvement as follows: parenting practices, volunteering, decision-making, communication, home learning, and community collaboration. These categories overlapped in their influence in school, at home, and out in the community. Children are secure when the latter three present a structure of collaboration and encourage them in achieving academically (Epstein, 2010).

Traditionally, parental involvement in schools was measured by counting the number of parents who attend meetings, work at activities, or raise money (Ballard et al., 2013).

These methods are important activities for parent organizations, but usually are not the best way to ensure the level of parental involvement in the actual education process in the schools.

Parents are considered as stakeholders and active participation of the parents is considered important in increasing educational quality (Çayak & Karsantık, 2020). The role of parents is increasingly appreciated by teachers in the process of building a satisfactory educational path for children and adolescents (Trzecińska-Król, 2020).

Parental involvement in school has multiple meanings and includes many variables such as parental aspirations, expectations, attitudes regarding education, and parents' active participation in school activities (Stevens-Smith, & Fleming, 2020). Parental involvement is an important factor in the education, learning, and academic achievement of children

and adolescents (Şengönül, 2022). It is well documented that when parents get involved in school activities, the involvement is correlated with academic outcomes throughout middle and high school (Gangolu, 2019). It has also been observed that learning improves with fewer learning-related behavior disorders, and grade retention is reduced (Day & Dotterer, 2018; Finn-Stevenson, 2014). Teachers are aware of the importance of involving parents in the education of their children, so they will encourage their children to do well academically and attend ASPs (Latunde, 2017).

Recently, several researchers cited Epstein in their works. For example, Perriell (2015) conducted a case study examining parental involvement and student academic achievements. Perriell's findings revealed that 83% of the parents believed that the major areas of parental involvement were parental support, encouragement, and assistance with their students' homework. Similarly, 82% of students believed that parents should provide encouragement and support. The student participants also believed that parents talking to them about the importance of school was the most important way parents could help them excel in academics. Overall, parental involvement was considered beneficial to children, teachers, and administrators. The key tenet in the Perriell study was that the nature and frequency with which parents positively interact with their children reflect the parents' investment in their children's education.

In contrast, some researchers questioned whether the Epstein model of parental involvement will work in high-minority, high-poverty schools. For example, Bower and Griffin (2011) argued that the Epstein model may not fully capture how parents in high-minority, high-poverty schools are involved in their children's education, indicating that

new ways of working with parents may be warranted. The claim is that although there is evidence that parental involvement is an effective strategy to increase student achievement, some schools still struggle with involving parents of color and low-income families (Bower & Griffin, 2011). The researchers claimed that schools may need to develop new strategies for parental involvement tailored to the population of the school, considering cultural differences.

Review of the Broader Problem

Research is important to provide insight into understanding educational parenting behaviors and to gain a better understanding of these parenting practices (Bhargava & Witherspoon, 2015). In the review of the literature, I began with an historical overview of the 21st CCLC Program established by Congress as Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. This is followed by a discussion of the literature on key aspects of the CCLC program. Walden University databases (ERIC, ProQuest, EBSCO Host, Google Scholar) were the primary sources of peer-reviewed journal articles. The internet was used to review government documents and to also examine literature from Google Scholar. Multiple search terms were used inclusive of but not limited to the following terms: *afterschool programs*, *21st CCLC Program*, *Epstein's partnership theory*, *Title IV, Part B*, *parental involvement*, *No Child Left Behind [NCLB]*, and *Supplemental educational services (SES)*. The literature review was continued until the point of saturation was reached.

The ASP

Over the past two decades, the number and types of ASPs have increased substantially. As a country, the United States continues to grapple with how to close the achievement gaps in the nation's schools (Williams, 2021). Policy makers also wrestle with the idea that the traditional school day is not the only place where and when children can learn. Approximately 1.17 billion dollars are funneled directly to states to support learning centers designed to provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools (Holstead et al., 2015; Kremer et al., 2015). Overall, the federal government picks up only 11% of the cost for ASPs, whereas individual states and local school districts pick up the remaining (Klein, 2018). The dollars spent were more likely to help children in poverty, who derive the biggest benefit from after-school programs. The benefits noted by the researchers were improved academics, social-emotional skills, and even attendance rates. Additionally, 45% of children in ASPs usually qualify for free or reduced-price lunch (Klein, 2018).

ASPs and Qualified Staffing

Though ASPs have long existed, they have seen a recent surge in popularity in the last few decades. ASPs have been demonstrated or theorized to be associated with a wide host of positive outcomes in youth including higher math and reading scores (Brady et al., 2017; English, 2020). Historically, because of NCLB (2002) and the new Common Core standards adopted by most states, including Mississippi, schools were under pressure to help their students raise their academic performance on standardized tests.

Theoretically, meeting high standards can be challenging in poor rural areas. Children's abilities are usually enhanced through tutoring and social development with the help of competent adults (Vygotsky, 1978). As such, any school should aim to provide high-quality ASPs for youth.

Contemporary ASPs in the United States can be traced to societal changes brought about by mass migration into cities, expansion of women in the workforce, child labor laws, and compulsory education (Kuperminc et al., 2019). A wide variety of youth programs, namely Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), came into being around the turn of the 20th century to meet pressing needs for young people to have a safe place to go after school hours (Kuperminc et al., 2019). The passages of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 and No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107□110), not only provided federal funding for afterschool programming (through the 21st CCLC program) but also shifted the primary purposes of afterschool programs from safety and childcare to enhancing school□related outcomes (Budd et al., 2020). Prior research has documented relationships between unsupervised time and poor developmental outcomes (Lester et al., 2020).

Despite evidence suggesting the positive effects of participation in ASPs, results continue to vary widely across studies. Using multilevel data from the national evaluation of the BGCA, Kuperminc et al. (2019) examined the associations among programmatic structures, workplace, and workforce characteristics, and relational practices of program staff to the experience of young people attending local clubs. The sample included over 57,000 members and 5,231 staff members at 740 BGCA sites. The findings suggested

that staffing and organizational processes, including community engagement and teamwork, are the foundations for establishing a culture of positive adult-youth interaction, which may contribute to the promotion of positive youth development (Kuperminc et al., 2019). The results of the study underscored the importance of staff workforce development as key to improving youth experiences in after-school programs.

Afterschool workers may perform many roles inclusive of helping with homework tutoring, mentoring, athletic director, and reading support; however, the qualifications including education, training, and experience that staff members should possess are questioned (Cole, 2011). Cole (2011) explored the qualifications of employees employed with CCLC in 42 states and the District of Columbia. Staff qualifications were divided into four categories: bachelor's degrees or higher, associate degrees, credentials or certificates, and education and training that did not require a degree. The most stringent qualifications were for program directors, who oversee and plan the program. Additionally, Cole found that the qualifications for frontline staff did not include academic degrees. Frontline staff members' qualifications who worked closely with children generally consisted of a high school diploma or equivalent and perhaps a few months of experience due to low compensation and the part-time nature of the jobs. These factors impeded the hiring of highly trained staff members. Until the skills needed for the job are defined and their importance is emphasized, addressing these factors will remain a challenge.

It is important to further examine these qualifications for after-school staff members, as the quality of afterschool teachers affects the academic skills of poor students who regularly attend high-quality ASPs (St. Clair & Stone, 2016). Students experience significant gains in achievement, work habits, and reductions in behavior problems when educators displayed higher professional standards. Thus, teacher quality is positively associated with differences in student outcomes, especially ASPs with higher professional standards for teachers (i.e., certification, content knowledge, and performance criteria) is present. If ASPs are to create an atmosphere of learning, stakeholders such as teachers and parents must seek to build relationships that make a difference in the learning lives of students.

Researchers have also reported the value of relationship-building between teachers and students and the importance of professional development to support these ideas. Teacher quality is about student–teacher relationships (Gehris, 2014). Quality relationships between students and teachers may enhance students’ learning and strengthen public perception of ASPs. To create effective and sustainable programs, teachers must stay abreast of what is trending by participating in professional development and joining professional associations (Price-Shingles & Place, 2016). Professional organizations that offer workshops and training for individuals who provide ASPs for youth could be beneficial in sustaining a quality ASP for participants.

Quality programs also include academic and social skills development, a caring environment, and an emphasis on participants’ physical and mental well-being. The key premise is that programs that consider these basic and necessary elements will obtain and

retain youth in these programs and help families recognize the value of participation. To create a quality ASP, the following actions should be considered: (a) conduct a needs assessment, (b) design the program, (c) develop community partnerships and seek funding, (d) secure facilities, (e) positively promote the program, and (f) conduct periodic evaluations (Price-Shingles & Place, 2016). In general, a successful program often will include the collaboration and presence of many stakeholders, inclusive of parents, teachers, and other stakeholders with shared morale, visibility in the school and community, and respect and support for students and each other.

ASPs also need to receive constant support from principals, other administrators, and the program coordinator to resolve day-to-day challenges (Hall et al., 2010; Smith, 2014; Zhang & Byrd, 2005). CCLCs should seek ways to attract mentors from partner agencies like faith-based organizations, universities, and recreation centers (Oliver, 2016). The aim is to look for strategies to improve learning around a variety of engaging activities in the community. To contribute to student well-being, staff must be supported by their administrators and other program coordinators. The ASPs promote continued learning that builds staff ability to be empowered problem solvers (Baldwin et al., 2015; Wiedow, 2017). Several key strategies that may be considered by program coordinators in the development and implementation of effective ASPs include the following:

- Commit and dedicate time to the process.
- Be reliable, trustworthy, and genuine.
- Encourage and support staff to seek solutions to problems

- Be nonjudgmental and encourage staff to be critical thinkers in their own right.
- Encourage many possibilities of action. (Wiedow, 2017)

Evidence supporting and demonstrating the effectiveness of quality ASPs was well documented in the literature. The research revealed the positive impact of ASPs on students and stressed the need for continuously striving to improve and finding ways to create more opportunities for students to participate in quality ASPs (Afterschool Alliance, 2014). In addition to addressing the importance of ASPs, researchers noted that nearly 90% of Americans agree that high-quality ASPs have significant and positive effects on student achievement test scores and school grades (Lester et al., 2020). Further, evidence has suggested that these programs positively impact students' reading and math proficiency. However, support from school staff and administrators is required to create effective and sustainable programs (Price-Shingles & Place, 2016). The initial steps for creating an ASP will require support from school staff, administrators, and various stakeholders. Conducting a thorough needs assessment provides critical information from potential program participants. Establishing program goals/objectives and formatting the desired program delivery will ensure students are participating in a program they designed and will hopefully lead to large participation numbers (Price-Shingles & Place, 2016). Forming partnerships with agencies can bolster the program with added resources to assist in helping supplement the budget.

The 21st CCLC

Approximately 50,000 public elementary, middle, and high school ASPs in the United States have been awarded billions of private and public dollars annually to operate (Kremer et al., 2015). One such program is the CCLC, which supports the provision of academic achievement opportunities particularly for students from impoverished communities attending low-performing schools. The program offers activities that support the students' regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children (Holstead et al., 2015). The 21st CCLC program has now become the largest federal funding stream for afterschool programming.

Researchers declared that many educational benefits are provided by CCLC ASPs. In a recent report published by the Afterschool Alliance (2021), the author noted that afterschool programs were designed to inspire kids to learn and give parents comfort in knowing that their kids are safe. Throughout the pandemic, the CCLC kept kids engaged in learning and met the needs of many families throughout the nation. However, the demand for these programs far exceeds the supply. Afterschool Alliance (2021) reported that nearly 25 million children do not attend an afterschool program because of a lack of availability to them. Programs are selected for funding based on their ability to meet the needs of students and families and their connection to education priorities in the state.

Researchers noted that well-implemented afterschool programs can promote positive learning and developmental outcomes. For example, Paluta et al. (2016)

examined the relationship among quality and outcomes of 21st CCLC after-school programs as perceived by stakeholders. Data were collected from 405 21st CCLCs programs that served elementary, middle, and high schools in a midwestern state. Data collection were open for approximately three months. The Ohio Quality Assessment Rubric (O-QAR) was used to measure program quality and outcomes.

Paluta et al. (2016) found that the CCLC program offered many educational benefits. These included better overall school attendance, improved academic performance, heightened self-esteem, and diminished problem behaviors. Additionally, Paluta et al. found that stakeholders' perceptions across all domains were positive. The findings suggested that the CCLC programs fulfilled their goals of increasing learning opportunities and support for youths and their families. This study also affirmed that CCLC programs implemented with a high degree of quality positively impact the lives of youth and promote students' learning and overall cognitive development.

After school programs provide low-income students and students of color with learning opportunities that the students would otherwise not get (Klumpner & Woolley, 2021). Klumpner and Woolley (2021) examined the school characteristics and the types of after school programming inclusive of 21st CCLC and other types. Using binary logistic regression models in a sample of schools (n = 1,601) the researchers found that under-resourced schools had lower odds of having a 21st CCLC program and higher odds of having a fee-based after school program. That is counter to the stated goals of the 21st CCLC program. These findings highlight the need 21st CCLC funding to prioritize

financial assistance and support for after school programs serving students from low-income families and communities.

Rural Students and ASPs

Rural youth are of particular interest as they represent the population of the rural community setting in this study. Cross and Lauzon (2015) raised the question asking, “What impact does rural youth participation in an ASP have on the youth wellbeing from the perspective of adults who know and are involved with the youth?” (p. 129). To address the question, Cross and Lauzon conducted a single case study, which they described as an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives, inclusive of three data sources: (a) document analysis, (b) observations, and (c) in-depth semi-structured interviews. The purpose of the document review was to develop an understanding of the development and functions of the afterschool program. The in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with adults who were most likely to provide information about the center and youth. The participants consisted of adults from three groups comprised of nine senior after-school program staff, three program administrative staff, and six adults who had knowledge of the program but were not part of the staff. Eighteen in-depth, individual interviews lasting 20-60 minutes were conducted (Cross & Lauzon, 2015).

Participants were asked questions that explored why the youth came to the center, what activities occurred at the center, and participants’ perceptions of the youth and center. The findings from data analysis revealed three key themes: (a) engaging youth through various programs and activities, (b) building relationships and connections, and

(c) promoting a place for the development of youth and their wellbeing. From the perspective of staff members, youth benefit from the center by having fun things to do and being able to try new things on their terms. The premise is that positive experiences gained through engaging in programs and activities help youth feel valued and confident. Overall, the participants believed that the center had a positive impact on wellbeing as youth indicated they felt less stressed and were more positive (Cross & Lauzon, 2015). Activities at the center helped support peer to peer interactions and students helped each other learn new skills

Overall, the Cross and Lauzon (2015) findings indicated that all participants described the center as being a safe place. Feeling safe was described as feeling and being both emotionally and physically safe. To achieve this, participants believed that the center should provide good staffing with adequate supervision and structure, a secure building, and not allow non-positive behaviors. Youth who feel safe, valued, and connected have less need to take risks to fit in.

ASPs and Child Safety

An argument can be made that afterschool tutoring programs provide a safe, supervised, and positive atmosphere for students rather than being left unsupervised after school. Aside from offering academic enrichment, another major feature of ASPs is the support rendered to families by keeping their children safe. Safe out-of-school environments are critical for nurturing youth and promoting positive youth development (Smith & Bradshaw, 2017). In a study conducted by Afterschool Alliance (2014), 75% of parents agreed that ASPs help gives working parent's peace of mind about their children

when they are at work. Smith and Bradshaw (2017) reported that the quality of programming in the afterschool helps determine whether children are safer and less vulnerable to negative peer affiliations and behavioral problems. They believed that participation in a well-structured and organized ASP will result in reduced delinquency for middle school students. The aim is to provide a safe and supportive learning environment.

After-school programs serve to enhance student learning with more flexibility regarding the curriculum and classroom structure (Qiu et al., 2021). Cummings et al. (2014) proposed that evidence-based programs should be implemented in an afterschool setting to offset at-risk factors such as substance abuse and alcoholism. Evidenced-based ASPs tend to help negate these risk factors. Participants indicated that substance abuse and other negative behaviors were incongruent with a healthy lifestyle. Cummings et al. (2014) also reported that after the program, the participants' commitment to avoiding risky behaviors and substance abuse lifestyles improved significantly.

Other than using school-based ASPs, some schools collaborate with other community agencies and law enforcement ASPs (Jones et al., 2021). For example, the Safety Net Collaborative was implemented in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This is a preventative integrated model comprised of mental health providers, police officers, and schools (Barrett & Janopaul-Naylor, 2016). Youth are often referred to this program by schools, courts, and parents. The results showed that the overall community arrests for at-risk youth had decreased by more than 50% since implementing this collaborative model of preventive services (Barrett & Janopaul-Naylor, 2016). Draper et al. (2015) contended

that middle school youth are in the early stages of identity-formation and tend to be more open and vulnerable to trying new behaviors based on what they observe around them.

ASPs can include activities to help guide students toward positive choices.

Parental Involvement in ASPs

To achieve positive educational outcomes, children often require parental involvement (Çayak, & Karsantik, 2020; Schlange et al., 2021). Parental involvement has two distinct practices, at home and in school. Also, the level of parental involvement varies based on individual, familial, and societal factors (Jabar et al., 2020). Dumont et al. (2014) supported the idea that parental involvement in homework has great potential to bridge the gap in which parents can become involved in their children's schooling and learning. Dumont et al. (2014) examined whether there was a reciprocal relationship between the quality of parental homework involvement and students' academic functioning over 2 years from Grade 5 to Grade 7 concerning reading achievement and academic functioning. The researchers concluded that parental help with homework matters for children's academic functioning, and the study highlighted the importance of parental involvement in homework. Although ASPs were designed to provide safe, learning environments for students, homework support is a helpful addition (Farrell et al., 2019).

Homework as a family literacy practice is a good option for children deemed at high risk for academic failure. Fox (2016) reported that parental involvement was mostly influenced by grade level and ability. Low achieving students in fourth grade received more parental involvement, as opposed to the more successful students. Children in sixth

grade with academic concerns showed a tendency to have less parental involvement in their homework. The premise was that a child's age, ability level, and socioeconomic status may determine the child's level of parental involvement (Fox, 2016).

Parental involvement at home or in school can be affected by different socioeconomic status indicators. Leddy (2018) claimed that parental involvement in schools should be a partnership between school personnel and parents that promotes the growth of children. Parental involvement in schools with mostly minority students is lower than it is in predominately White, non-Hispanic, and middle-class schools. It has further been demonstrated that poor and minority parents may come to feel isolated, ignored, and unwelcomed in schools. Jabar et al. (2020) investigated the influence of the different socioeconomic-related variables on parental involvement, such as monthly income and living conditions. Based on a survey conducted with 1,638 parents from 29 public schools in poverty-stricken areas, Jabar et al. found that the survey offered four key findings: (a) the parents generally were more or less involved at home than in school; (b) parents in relatively higher income groups showed parental involvement both at home and in school; (c) parental involvement in school was relatively higher among Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Program member parents than non-CCT parents, and (d), regression analysis identified membership in CCT as a predictor of parental involvement. The researchers concluded that financial resources from work or the CCT program could facilitate parental involvement in children's education, especially among parents from relatively high income generating households and families living in poverty. Also, parents who were considered to be very poor established parental involvement at

home and in school more so than those who viewed themselves to be economically better off.

ASPs are designed to promote academic achievement and youth development as well as mitigate risk for students who attend. (Lester et al., 2020). Afterschool programs will yield better behavior and social skills, which in turn would contribute to the self-control and persistence needed in academic activities. Furthermore, such programs would help connect the home and school lives of the students, and schools should be willing to partner with the ASPs. In a systematic review, Lester et al. (2020) reported that ASPs are associated with increased academic proficiency, school bonding, prosocial behavior, and decreased problem behavior.

Young people learn through participation in various formal and informal settings. In order for students to deal with complex challenges in the near future, they need to be equipped with a variety of twenty-first-century skills such as problem solving, collaboration, literacy, and communication skills (Pálsdóttir, 2019). David (2011) mentioned the 21st CCLC after-school initiative yet argued that children need activities after school that are different from the ones that take place during the routine school day. Enticing activities would help these possibly emotionally vulnerable children engage on many levels (David, 2011). The premise is that having some type of academic structure in how children are taught skills, effectively engages children in academic work and social activities.

Attendance at ASPs

In a recent report, Klein (2018) noted that improvement needs to be made in education to improve oversight of 21st-century ASP programs in terms of measuring the attendance and disciplinary behaviors of the students participating in these programs. Currently, only 26 states choose to measure either the attendance or disciplinary records of students who participate in the 21st-century programs (Klein, 2018). In earlier studies, Kauh (2011) reported that middle school students in an ASP in Providence, R.I had a 25% lower absentee rate during regular school hours than their peers. The improvement in attendance increased with the amount of time in the program. Vile et al. (2009) reported that middle school students attending an ASP had higher attendance rates in day school than their peers who did not participate. The researchers suggested that the same groups of students would likely attend high school regularly, even though the program did not extend to high school. Students in the 11th grade attended school 13 more days than their peers who had not attended the ASP. The key premise is that when students engage in challenging activities, it helps them develop persistence, and students feel an increased sense of belonging at school.

After-school programs can enhance learning and cultivate stronger family and school connections (Reischl et al., 2017). St. Clair and Stone (2016) posited economically disadvantaged students experience significant gains and benefits when they regularly attend high-quality ASPs. Regular attendance was associated with academic achievement, improved work habits, and reductions in behavior problems. Springer and Diffily (2012) examined the relationship between intensity and breadth of after-school

program participation and academic achievement in a short-term longitudinal study, as measured by changes in grades and attendance. The sample was 719 members of local Boys and Girls Clubs. Springer and Diffily found that the extent of participation in the Boys and Girls Clubs was positively related to increases in GPA. This was based on reports from the first week to the last six-week grading period. The relationship was stronger for elementary students.

Springer and Diffily (2012) suggested that participation in structured ASPs positively affected academic achievement. Such determinations are relevant to the present study, which will focus not only on those who attend and registered but do not attend the program and also on those who only attend the program sporadically. Still, a variety of reasons for not attending ASPs should be considered. They include such obstacles as transportation, safety issues, and home environment (Sanderson & Richards, 2010). Other obstacles include family responsibilities such as sibling care and access to information about the programs.

Student Engagement in the ASP

Attendance is not the only element in a successful ASP. Boyer and Tracz (2014) posited that *engagement* is most strongly related to program design and youth outcomes. Engagement is important for assessing the quality of a program (Feingold, 2017; Fredricks et al., 2014). Grogan et al. (2014) examined the association between engagement and academic and social outcomes in after-school programs from the perspectives of staff and elementary school teachers using the ratings of a range of after-school activities from the Staff-Rated Student Engagement Survey. The survey also asked

the youth to self-report on various elements of engagement with a focus on participation, attentiveness, the appeal of information taught, and efforts towards advancing one's learning.

Grogan et al. (2014) provided evidence that students who were actively engaged in specific types of activities, such as art and music while attending ASP benefitted the most. This study stressed the importance of student engagement when assessing student outcomes in ASPs. Engagement was a key factor in the study and was viewed as a key indicator of program quality, an important indicator of how well a program is designed, implemented, and received by the youth. Based on the research presented, it is reasonable to conclude that ASPs provide opportunities for students to interact with peers in smaller groups and develop a sense of belonging; these are important components of engaging environments.

Proper Supervision

After-school programs aim to alleviate crime rates, academic achievement gaps, substance use, and other behavioral problems, especially for youth from low socioeconomic areas (Marttinen et al., 2021). Afterschool programs based solely on academic activities have had little positive effect on scholastic achievement by themselves. Luter et al. (2017) argued that academics alone may contribute to negative behavior if students are not properly supervised during unstructured time. Luter et al. conducted a qualitative case study that explored the perceptions of both parents and children relevant to their views of a university-assisted community school (UACS) afterschool project. The organization consisted of community mentors and volunteers.

Volunteers led the majority of the activities, and the many volunteers were viewed by the administrative staff as essential resources to run the program (Luter et al., 2017).

UACS provided a variety of services inclusive of tutoring and counseling. Participants were selected based on factors such as attendance, tardiness, grades, and behavioral referrals. Data sources included field notes, parent interviews, child focus groups, and four follow-up child interviews. All children in the school were eligible, to attend the school, but only 23% of the student population attended the UACS. Participants were invited to reflect on how the UACS shaped their life and school experiences. The participants described the UACS as being very different from the average school day. Parents and students described these differences as positive and enriching. Volunteers led the majority of the activities and the many volunteers were viewed by the administrative staff as essential resources to run the program (Luter et al., 2017).

The results of the study indicated that all participants viewed the UACS as a pathway for positive youth development. The results of the study by Luter et al. (2017) also indicated that other community-assisted programs could foster other positive outcomes that can include self-and social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making skills. In contrast, two of the children indicated they had experienced boredom and bullying, which are challenges that should be appropriately addressed by the administrators and other practitioners. The overall aim of ASP is to promote a respectful, welcoming school climate with leadership that fosters and maintains meaningful relationships with families and communities (Ishimaru et al., 2014;

National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). The key premise is that community-supported agencies like UACS could be a promising educational source for school leaders and parents to become more familiar with how to collaborate and promote academic achievement.

Collaboration

Collaboration in education is not a new concept. Trent (2020) noted that educators generally work well together within disciplines to share the workload or to share expertise. However, little is known about which aspects of after-school programs are required for children to thrive intellectually, socially, and academically (Provenzano et al., 2020). Boyer and Crippen (2014) emphasized that the collaborative work of teachers, students, parents, administrators, and the community is needed to make sure that every student's academic needs are met. The premise is that through collaborative efforts students will play an active role in their learning process and they will become more accountable for their learning success.

Promoting Healthy Growth and Development in ASPs

Aside from academics and other engaging activities, increased physical activities (PA) were deemed important to promote healthy growth and development in school-aged children in ASPs. Studies have shown that physically active children are at lower risk for developing chronic diseases, children are usually better physically fit, psychologically healthier, and higher academic achievers (Youngdeok & Lochbaum, 2017). The researchers noted that African American minority children living in high-poverty neighborhoods were at high risk of not having enough PA during regular school hours.

Researchers have argued that there is a relationship between physical activity and a child's health and well-being. Riiser et al. (2017) claimed that physical activity may positively influence many health factors. Riiser et al. believed that physical activity interventions in school can be effective in engaging children in physical activity. However, the researchers believed physical activity in school is not enough. The argument is that physical activity in school is limited to physical education or recess. Riiser et al. supported the idea that physical activities incorporated in ASPs are a positive intervention directed at increasing the necessary physical activity among school-age children.

Youngdeok and Lochbaum (2017) examined the contributions of regular PA in minority children while attending a school-based ASP in promoting PA. Aside from focusing on academics, homework assistance, visual and performing arts, PA was established in the school. The PA programs were structured with age-appropriate and task-centered mastery activities that involved gross motor skills (such as running, kicking, throwing), with the primary goals of fostering an enjoyment of and commitment to PA. The researchers found that school-based afterschool PA, in addition to regular PE classes were of great benefit to minority students during school days. The study emphasized the significant role of school-based ASPs in promoting PA outside of school hours for minority students.

Summary of Literature

The increased federal and private funding for ASPs has resulted in a marked increase in ASPs for over two decades. Research supports the fact that ASPs are

significant to prevent adverse outcomes and promote positive outcomes with at-risk youth in key areas of academic achievement, crime and behavioral problems, socio-emotional functioning, and school engagement and attendance. However, as with any ASP, students need to participate regularly to reap the full benefits (Huang et al., 2014; Kremer et al., 2015). The value in ASPs has been documented; thus, attendance issues need to be addressed to ensure the academic success of more children.

The literature included in this review focused mainly on ASPs and highlighted the various ways these programs impact children's learning, inclusive of improving academic achievement (Luter et al., 2017). Many researchers agreed that ASPs' impact largely depends upon the staffing experiences, needs, quality measures, supportive relationships with parents, and overall climate. Some ASPs reviewed focused on students who were economically disadvantaged and/or from racial/ethnic minorities (Hall et al., 2010). The studies indicated that not only do ASPs support students' academic success but also provide a haven with structured activities for students living in low-socioeconomic environments (Luter et al., 2017).

The literature reviewed indicated that afterschool CCLC programs are a significant part of the educational support systems to help less advantaged students stay in school and prepare for life. As a part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen these support systems, I sought to present evidence-based information about the core elements of ASP. To accomplish this, a comprehensive search and review were conducted of recent major studies on ASP for elements and programs proven to be effective through empirical research. The literature review pointed out that children living in poverty often

experienced risk factors that can adversely affect their academic skills. The literature suggested that when poor students regularly attended high-quality ASP, they experienced significant gains in achievement and reductions in behavior problems (St. Clair & Stone, 2016). ASPs provide a valuable support for many students.

Implications

In the present project study, I used a qualitative method with a focus on examining the local CCLC ASP, particularly concerning teacher and parent perspectives. The primary research questions examined how participating teachers and parents perceive a middle school CCLC ASP. In the study, I sought to provide evidence that the CCLC ASP can show promise in improving students' reading performance. However, as with any ASP, students need to participate regularly to reap the full benefits (Huang et al., 2014).

This study was important to make the case for why and how parents and teachers can make a difference in the support of the 21st CCLC afterschool initiative. This qualitative case study may enable researchers to better understand and seek solutions for the problem by exploring the perceptions of parents and teachers. Merriam (2009) stated that a case study is appropriate for investigating and evaluating educational programs and informing policy. This project study may provide valuable insight from the perspectives of parents and teachers within the school in the hope that students will be fully encouraged to take advantage of afterschool tutoring programs and other extracurricular activities. Additionally, to complete the project study, I completed a professional

development project. The focus of the project was developed from data findings and informed by the literature review of related research.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative project study was to explore, understand, and describe the practices and perceptions of CCLC teachers and parents of students enrolled in the 21st CCLC afterschool program. This study can also be used to help parents, teachers, and students to become more aware of the effects of parental involvement in encouraging their children to be involved in afterschool tutoring programs and how these programs impact the overall wellbeing of students. The research-based literature revealed that out-of-school programs can positively impact school attendance, academic outcomes, including standardized test scores when properly developed and implemented. The 21st CCLC programs were designed to improve student outcomes in the areas of school attendance, academic performance, and student behavior. More research is recommended to address the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding the 21st CCLC ASP.

Section 2 is a continuation of the project study which presents the methodology component of the study. The first part of Section 2 includes a description of the qualitative research design that was used in this study, followed by a discussion of the criteria for selecting the participants, procedures for data collection and analysis, and limitations. The second half relates to the final study and includes results.

Section 2: The Methodology

The problem in the local 21st CCLC ASP is that 40% of the students enrolled performed below the proficiency level in reading on the state assessed exams during the past 3 school years (local school records, 2019). In this study, I used a case study design to understand parents' and teachers' perceptions of the 21st CCLC ASP to address the problem. The action of this study is the development of a project to meet the needs indicated during data collection. In this section, I present the design characteristics, the justification for using the approach, the participants, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

The purpose of this qualitative project study was to explore, understand, and describe the practices and perceptions of CCLC teachers and parents of students enrolled in the 21st CCLC afterschool program. I used a qualitative research method for this study instead of a quantitative method. Using a qualitative approach helps the investigator to understand life experiences, give meaning to a problem, and interpret the nature of a phenomenon (Yin, 2014). Qualitative research methods involve exploring the process of how individuals attach meanings to complex issues affecting their lives and actions in given situations (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2014). As such, the qualitative method allowed me to obtain a greater understanding of the parents' and teachers' perceptions of the 21st CCLC afterschool program coupled with parental involvement. In contrast, quantitative research methods were not considered a good fit for collecting and analyzing the data. The goal of quantitative research is to use data limited to numbers or statistics to

understand relationships between the variables of study (Creswell, 2013; Mertler, 2012; Salkind, 2008).

Case studies are designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data, a process called triangulation (Yin, 2014). The three data sources that met the criteria for triangulation in this study were teachers' and parents' interviews, and document analysis. Document analysis included a review of relevant information from the local CCLC Handbook displayed in Appendix E. The first step in this case study research was to establish the object or case. The object in a case study is often a program, an entity, a person, or a group of people (Yin, 2014). The object of this case study is the 21st CCLC ASP.

Aside from the case study, qualitative designs include a wide variety such as basic qualitative, narrative, grounded theory, ethnography, case study, and phenomenology (Creswell, 2013). The basic qualitative or generic qualitative study is an approach to inquiry that is not guided by an explicit set of philosophic assumptions in the form of one of the known qualitative methodologies. The narrative approach is a genre in qualitative research whereby researchers interpret stories that are told within the context of research and/or are shared in everyday life (Papakitsou, 2020). The focus of the present study was not the life stories of the participants and therefore deemed less appropriate.

Grounded theory is described as the discovery of emerging patterns in data using inductive coding because the researcher does not preconceive the coding scheme (Chong, 2019). Since the aim of this study was not to propose a theory from collected data, the grounded theory was not deemed appropriate for this study. Ethnography designs are

used to explain the ways that culture constructs and is constructed by the behaviors and experiences of its members (Creswell, 2013). Ethnography usually involves observations and presence in a setting over an extended period of time. The basis for this study was unrelated to a specific culture or ethnic group within the social and health sciences, and data were collected from one interview and related ASP materials rather than observations over time. The phenomenological design is used to describe how human beings undergo a certain phenomenon, their lived experiences, and my purpose was to understand the parents' and teachers' points of view rather than lived experiences involving the CCLEE program (Parvan et al., 2018).

Several qualitative researchers have used case study research. Case studies are exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory (Yin, 2014). The case study allows tailoring the design and data collection procedures to the research questions. Case study is one of the most frequently used qualitative research methodologies, but research methodologists have failed to establish a consensus on the design and implementation of case study research (Yazan, 2015). However, from Yin's (2014) perspective, case study research design is comprised of five components: research questions; its propositions, if any; its unit(s) of analysis; the logic linking the data to the propositions; and the criteria for interpreting the findings (Yazan, 2015). For the research design, I selected a descriptive case study design, which is designed to explore, explain, and describe the phenomenon or what is happening in more detail, and fill in the missing information (Yin, 2014). Information was collected to answer the *what* and *how* questions rather than the *why* that occurs in a natural setting.

Participants

All parents with students attending the local ASP program were invited to participate. Parent and teacher participation in the research study was strictly voluntary. The number of participants selected represents the number of teachers presently teaching in the ASP. There were a total of six parents and six teachers purposefully selected within one rural middle school in the state of Mississippi. The first six parents who agreed to participate were selected.

Several factors can help the researcher determine the number of participants needed in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2009). There is no required number of participants to be interviewed in a case study (Yin, 2009). It depends on the number that the researcher believes can meet the demand of the research or reach the point of saturation of data. In qualitative research, saturation is reached at the point in data collection when any new data or information only confirm the themes and conclusions already reached (Merriam, 2009). The premise is that saturation occurs when data collection does not provide any more useful information on the issue or phenomenon under investigation. In the present study, the number of teacher participants was limited to the number of teachers who presently taught at the school. However, saturation was achieved when I reached the point where no new data and no new themes emerged.

Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants

Permission to conduct research first began when I obtained permission from the school superintendent (see Appendix B). After applying and approval (#04-01-19-0164383) from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), participants were

contacted in person or via school email, to which I have personal access. I emailed the informed consent form to teachers who expressed interest in the research. I also asked the school counselors for a list of parents of students presently enrolled in the program. The parents were invited to participate via email. Parents who did not respond to the initial invitations were sent reminders. The first six parents who accepted the invitation were interviewed. Brief descriptions of the participants are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Profile

Participants	Profile
Teacher 1	African American. Teaches 5 th Grade ELA, with > 10 years experience.
Teacher 2	Caucasian with > than 10 years teaching experience 7 th and 8 th -grade
Teacher 3	28 years of teaching. Teaches 7 th and 8 th -grade.
Teacher 4	14 years. Currently teaching 8 th -grade science.
Teacher 5	16 years of teaching. BS, MA, Ed.S Educational Leadership.
Teacher 6	African American with > 12 years of teaching.
Parent 1	Married African American female with one child attending CCLC
Parent 2	Married African American female with two children. One tends the CCLC.
Parent 3	Mother of two boys, one 9 th grade high school and the other is 6-grade middle school CCLC.
Parent 4	Mother of 4 kids. 3 attend elementary and 1 middle school CCLC
Parent 5	Father of 1 child who attends CCLC
Parent 6	Married with kids.

Researcher–Participant Working Relationship

This study focused primarily on the perceptions of participants. None of the participants in this study were children. The relationship between me and the research participants is integral to the quality of the research. This study was built on a working and ethical relationship between me and all participants. Identification of the appropriate participants and securing their agreement were among the first steps I took to establish a trusting researcher–participant working relationship. I sought to establish trust by presenting documented consent forms to demonstrate the reassurance of the confidentiality of the participants’ involvement in the project study. The forms included the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of the study; and a statement that participants may withdraw at any time before, during, or after the research study for any reason, without any problems.

Ethical Protection of Participants

An IRB application was submitted with detailed information that explained the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of the study, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality, and contact information in the letter of invitation. I made sure that all participants were fully informed. All participants were told in person and writing that all information gained from the interviews would be handled confidentially and that I would know who participated in this study. At no time were participants subjected to bodily harm and participants were told that they could discontinue participation at any time during the study. For this study, all names of participants were de-identified and assigned alphanumeric names (e.g., T1, P3).

My National Institute of Health certification number is 360371; this number indicates that I successfully completed the training for engaging in academic research. As the primary researcher, I was responsible for promoting and maintaining the integrity of the study. As such, it was my responsibility to uphold the shared values in my work and in my conduct throughout the research process, which meant that I aimed to adhere to good scientific practices while conducting this study. Additionally, I sought to keep good records, adhere to Walden's policies, standards, and expectations. All research data files, inclusive of transcripts and handwritten notes, were stored on my password-protected computer and will remain for 7 years. After this, all stored information will be deleted.

Data Collection

The purpose of the data collection process was to ensure high-quality data to address the research questions of the study. Data collected included interviews with direct quotes, individual opinions, and my perceptions of the participants as interpreters. Data were recorded and transcribed from both teachers and parents. I listened to the audio recordings and converted the important recorded conversations into written word-for-word documents. Additionally, the data collection process included document analysis, which is explained in the following sections.

Interviews are one of the most important sources of qualitative information and take several forms: open-ended, semi-structured, and structured (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014). The individual semistructured interview was chosen for the current project because it provides the opportunity to generate rich data through the voices of participants and is considered essential in gaining insight into their perceptions (Strauss

& Corbin, 1990). The interview format for this study was semistructured and the questions were prepared before the session began. In an open-ended interview, participants were asked to comment or provide insight into certain events (see Appendix A). The interviews took place for approximately 45 minutes to an hour with questions and probes prepared in advance. All the questions were tied to one or more of the research questions.

Parent and Teacher Interviews

The interviews were recorded with a small handheld digital recorder. I took notes during the interview as a reminder of key points to follow up on without disturbing the flow of the conversation. To gain adequate information, the interviews took approximately 45-60 minutes. Participants were reminded that all data collected would remain confidential. Each interview took place in the school library after work. The aim was to put the interviewees at ease to allow them to concentrate on the questions being asked and feel that their privacy was protected. The teacher interviews were conducted first followed by the parents' interviews over a 30-day period. Participants were told to remain open to the possibility of a follow-up interview. After reviewing all transcripts, no questions were found that needed to be refined or probed in a subsequent interview.

Document Analysis

Document analysis is a means of triangulation that includes reviewing printed or electronic material for corroborating evidence (Bowen, 2009; Yin, 2014). The document analysis included a review of the CCLC ASP handbook, which was available upon request from the school administrator and teachers. Aside from the mission and goals,

basic policy, and admission guidelines, the handbook addressed the following topics relevant to this study: (a) attendance policy, (b) scheduling, (c) parent participation, (d) staff responsibility, and (e) professional development. Since these topics in the handbook were the focus of this study, they were selected for review and analysis. The extracted text from the handbook may be viewed in Appendix E.

Systems for Keeping Track of Data

Keeping track of data and data management, in general, was an integral part of this qualitative research to ensure the success and credibility of the study. As such, I took several steps to track and protect the data and to gain a better understanding of the data. First, I uploaded the transcribed data to the Atlas Ti 6.0 qualitative software to help with the storage and management of the data. I also kept, maintained, and organized the field notes. I combined and labeled related themes into major categories and created files in the word document. All data were stored on a password-protected computer for future reference and write-up.

Role of the Researcher

As the primary instrument, I approached this study from a constructivist, qualitative research standpoint. Every researcher brings experiences and opinions to the interviews; however, I aimed to make sure that I understood my biases and set them aside during communications with the participants. In other words, I set aside any preconceived ideas or notions to hear the voices of the participants, a process Merriam (2009) described as bracketing. This process allowed me to use information gathered during the interviews to develop the themes and ultimately bring significance to the study. My

relationship with the teachers was strictly professional. I did not directly or indirectly supervise any of the participants nor did I have any known personal conflicts of interest.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was an iterative and ongoing process and is often referred to as interpreting the data or attaching meaning to the analysis (Bowen, 2009; Yin, 2014). Data analysis began immediately after I transcribed the voice recordings. The following section describes the process.

Interview Analysis

I proceeded with the data analysis of the interviews using multiple steps. To begin, I sought to set aside all biases or preconceived thoughts about the program being studied, a step Merriam (2009) referred to as bracketing. A constant comparative method was used to analyze the data described in qualitative research as a systematic approach for analyzing generated responses aligned with relevant categories of meaning and relationships (Merriam, 2009).

The Atlas Ti 6.0, computer-based qualitative software, was used to organize and manage the transcripts. I used the inductive coding process that included reading and rereading the interview transcripts in search of similarities and patterns, a process described as open coding (Merriam, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Specifically, I implemented the following steps: I selected a passage of transcribed text and coded it, and then compared it with coded passages in other interviews. This ensured me that the coding was consistent or that there were dimensions in the passages that might well be coded another way. I continued to identify ideas and code them, then categorized the

codes until I had identified and labeled all relevant themes. I used these themes to make connections and to explain the findings.

Document Analysis

Concerning the document analysis, I followed a very similar approach that was used when analyzing the interview data. The goal was to find relevant words and phrases that helped determine the underlying meaning of the full text (Bowen, 2009). I first scanned the single document (CCLC Handbook) to gain some insight into the CCLC program in general. The handbook was neatly organized by topics. By examining information collected through document analysis, I was able to corroborate findings across the interview data sets. The analysis yielded insightful information that helped to corroborate and fill gaps in the interview data. The findings are reported in the result section of this study.

Evidence of Quality

Evidence of quality was presented in the selection of multiple data sources, a process described as triangulation. Multiple data sources were used to corroborate the findings as suggested by Yin (2014). Yin posited that the results of case study research are more important if the findings are based on more than one source of data. The three data sources in this study were the teacher interviews, the parents' interviews, and document analysis. Document analysis is a systematic qualitative research method used in combination with other qualitative methods as a means of triangulation (Yin, 2014). For this study, document analysis included a review of the ASP curriculum, attendance records, and schedule of student activities. These documents provided support for

information obtained during the interviews to address questions of student engagement activities and student attendance.

Additionally, in conducting a member check, participants were provided the opportunity to review my summary of the interviews that I emailed to each of them to avoid inaccuracies in my interpretations. Member checking is an integral part of creating trustworthiness in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Out of the 12 participants, two teachers and three parents responded that the summaries reflected their perceptions and did not recommend changes.

I sought to develop a list of key points or any notable discrepant cases (surprise or unexpected findings) that may be critical to the analysis. I actively looked for any unexpected or negative experiences or viewpoints that were different from the main interview responses to strengthen my project. Although some participants had differences in their views, no contradictory or negative views were discovered.

Data Analysis Results

The process by which the data were generated, gathered, and recorded was outlined and explained in the previous section. The participants recruited and interviewed for the study were six teachers and six parents connected to the CCLC. Collectively, there were four female teachers and two males, of whom three were African Americans and three were Caucasians. All parents were African Americans.. Using open coding, I analyzed the transcribed interviews beginning with reading and rereading the narratives to gain an in-depth understanding of the meanings. I then used open coding by assigning meaning to words and phrases in each transcript. I then created categories for large

sections of data based on the coded meanings that emerged from the data. I analyzed the coded data by constantly comparing specific points or perspectives to develop categories then broader themes.

The problem in the CCLC ASP in this Title I middle school (Grades 6-8) was that 40% of the students enrolled performed below the proficiency level in reading on the state-assessed exams for the past 3 years (local school records, 2019). Although the school showed slight gains in reading improvement, the students did not perform up to the state standards required by the state.

In this section, I present the findings that emerged from a qualitative case study methodology. Data were collected from parents and teacher interviews, and document analysis. Pseudonyms for the teacher and parent participants were created to ensure that all participants' identities were kept private. The findings presented served to answer the research questions that examined the perceptions of teachers and parents of the ASP relevant to their practices to improve reading achievement and parental involvement for low-performing students. The answers to the research questions follow the presentation and discussion of each theme.

Theme 1: Building Literacy Skills

Each teacher participant was asked to describe their role or responsibilities in the CCLC ASP. The responses varied among the six teachers but were very similar in tone. All of the teachers stated that they had worked with the CCLC program since its inception in 2011. T 1 replied, "The afterschool program makes sure that all instructional needs are met for the ASP teachers. We do not have to always wonder what to do next.

The teachers meet and plan the lessons that will benefit low-performing students.” T2 stated, “I communicated with the students, parents, and student’s daytime classroom teachers regularly.”

The term “literacy skills” was highlighted and mentioned by four of the six teachers interviewed. Teachers also addressed students’ math and reading skills. T1, “As an afterschool teacher, my responsibility is to make sure no child is left behind. All students learn differently. I have to make sure the lessons are delivered in a manner that they can apply across the board.” T 2 stated: “I work with small groups of students to teach them reading, mostly seventh graders, the transitional year for kids.” He stated that it was his passion to teach students who are reading below grade level adding, “I use a language-based approach in reading, a sound to letter rather than a letter to sound. I find it works because reading is 98% auditory.” There was some indication that students often have trouble with reading and math. For example, T3 reported that she tutors students who are struggling with math: “We try to divide the students up according to their tutoring needs. We mostly have students who struggle with reading and math. The groups are smaller and lots of teacher time is being utilized than during the regular school day.”

T4 stated that she works with students in all areas. “Most students are deficient in literacy skills such as reading and reading in math.” She stated that the program helps motivate students by demonstrating that the literacy skills they develop will help them to succeed in the future as they move into high school. T5 described her role as working with students described as ELLs: “My role is to tutor students to improve their English skills. I use computer software and bilingual books to help students improve their literacy

skills.” She added, “I believe that the program excites the children about learning and helps them set higher learning goals for themselves.” T6 stated, “The majority of the students invited to participate in the afterschool program are struggling to meet academic standards. My main goal is to work with the students and tutor them in needed areas determined by the director and school counselor.” The theme seemed to indicate that all teachers in the ASP aimed to promote literacy through tutoring students to improve reading skills and improve math skills as a part of reading.

Theme 2: Ensure Academic Success on State-Mandated Tests

Each teacher was asked to describe their instructions and experience in the ASP. T1 stated, “As an afterschool teacher, my responsibility is making sure no child is left behind.” T3 responded that she discovered that students participating in the afterschool programs saw gains in their math state test scores compared to some other students who did not attend the program. T4 echoed similar thoughts about math improvement. They both participated in weekly staff meetings and expressed total commitment to classroom engagement.

T5’s response was, “My main goal is to assist the students to meet the state standards for core academic subjects by providing them with academic instructions in their weak reading areas and to build their reading literacy skills.” T6 replied, “I use the state-mandated test results as a guide to determine the needs of the individual students.” He shared that he gets a list of the struggling students from the homeroom teachers of students who attend the program. “I aim to increase ELL’s reading achievement on the state test.” T6 stated, “The CCLC program helps to boost students’ academic

performance, especially students who fall behind in school and need extra support and tutoring.”

Theme 3: More Parental Involvement is Needed

Three parents and four teachers expressed the importance of parental involvement; however, it was the teachers who overwhelmingly expressed a need for more parental involvement. When asked about parent involvement in the afterschool program, T1 responded, “Most of the parents are involved. After all, they signed their kids up for the program, which shows some kind of investment. We hold workshops for them every month so they can get a deeper understanding of what their child is up to in school and after school.” T2 replied, “The parent workshop gives the parents insight on what the students are working on during the regular class day and ASP. Teachers 3, 4, and 5 shared similar thoughts. “T6 stated, “Parental involvement is essential to improve academic achievement. We often have to send out reminders through letters, phone calls, and the Class Dojo app about upcoming workshops,”

I asked, “In what ways are you involved with the CCLC?” Only two parents expressed some involvement. Three of the parents stated they were not involved all the time because of work hours and schedules. P1 stated, “I am involved in the program by volunteering to bring snacks or volunteer on field trips.” P2 stated, “I attend the monthly meeting when I can.” P6 stated that she would probably be more involved if the parent workshops or meetings were held on the weekend. Although some of the parents were not regularly involved with the program, they indicated that they made sure that their children attend the classes.

I asked the parents “What advice would you offer to other parents to encourage their afterschool involvement?” Parent 1 stated,

I recommend that parents contact their child’s teacher to get a list of standards or areas that their child is struggling in and give it to the afterschool teacher. That way she knows exactly what to help your child with. Also, if you can, assist by volunteering in the class or with snacks for the children.

P2 stated, “Let your child experience the after-school program even though you may not want to. It would help them in the long run.” Continuing, she stated, “Get the parents involved more during the regular school day. Allow them to come up and help in the class.” P3 answered, “I would recommend that other parents allow their child to attend the program because I have seen a difference in my child’s learning ability. The programs also provide information to parents that will help them along the way as well.” P4 stated, “I feel that the teachers should involve the parents by having a family night out at the school. They can discuss what’s important for their child and also allow parents to become more comfortable around the teachers.” The general consensus of the parents was that the ASP was beneficial for the students, more students should attend, and more parental involvement was needed.

Theme 4: A Need to Improve Math and Reading Skills

The teachers were asked if they noticed any changes in the student’s reading achievement. Two of the six teachers indicated a need for students to improve their reading skills. T1 stated, “Yes. During the first 30 minutes, students log in to their Read Theory accounts. Read Theory is an instructional tool used for students to target their

reading deficiency. I can pull passages that they may have struggled with.” T3 stated, “I have noticed changes, which might be true because they are participating in extra enrichment activities. They are all engaged with the material. I wish all students would attend, the ones who come are making more progress.”

Four of the six parents expressed that their children attended the CCLC because they were struggling with math or reading or both. Parent 1 stated,

My daughter struggles terribly in math. This year has been very hard for her. The teacher in the 21st-century program contacted her teacher to see exactly what standards she was not mastering. My daughter now has mastered her multiplications and her math grades are a lot better.

P2 stated, “My son is a struggling reader, therefore, he does not like to read in class. With his teachers knowing that they make him feel comfortable to read in front of them because other students are struggling readers in the program as well.” I asked, “Since your child has started participating, have your expectations matched what the program offers?” She replied, “Most definitely! My son is still shy to read because he struggles with that, but he can comprehend things better now.” P4 stated that she works full-time and enrolled her child in the program so she could get help with her math and reading skills. P4 added, “I have seen improvement in reading.” This theme appeared to overlap with Theme 1 as it relates to improving the literacy skills and a need to improve math and reading skills,

Theme 5: Activities Designed for Student Engagement

Teachers were asked to describe the type of activities for students in the afterschool program in terms of student engagement in reading. T1 stated: “The classroom is divided into stations to target deficits in reading comprehension, vocabulary, spelling, and writing and computer area. The students rotate stations every 25 minutes.”

T2’s response was:

We have additional programs that zoom in on reading that make the children feel successful, activities are more enriching. During the school day, some of the students feel they cannot compete with more competent peers whereas in the ASP program they all shine and get so much positive reinforcement.

I asked each parent to describe the type of activities provided by their child in the afterschool program. The responses varied widely but were very similar in comparison. For example, P1 stated, “My daughter is provided with homework assistance, content help in areas that she is struggling in, as well as social skills.” P2 stated, “The types of activities the students are provided help them with test taking strategies for the upcoming state assessment.” Continuing, P2 noted that her son is more relaxed in the classroom setting than he was before. All of the parents indicated that since their children started participating in the CCLC, their expectations had matched what the program offered. For example, P1 stated:

The program offers so much more than what I imagined. My daughter also struggled with getting along with kids because being the only child she thinks that everything is supposed to go her way. The after school teachers have gotten her to

socialize with her classmates in a way that she has never done before. All she talks about now are the kids in her class and how her teacher gets them to play different games to help with their social skills.

This sentiment about improved social opportunities was expressed by other parents. P2 stated, “Most definitely! My son is still shy to read because he struggles with reading but he can comprehend things better now. He’s more relaxed in the classroom setting than he was before.” P3 stated, “My child enjoys going to afterschool because they give them activities that help stimulate their brains while being in a smaller section.” P4, P5, and P6 simply noted that their expectations had matched or exceeded what the program offered.

Each parent was asked whether they had seen some improvement or academic gains since their child was attending CCLC. All of the parents acknowledged that they had seen some improvement or academic gains. P2 stated,

I really like the way the program is set up because the students are getting a little bit of all the subjects. They are able to receive that extra help with their homework assignments and they are being assisted with their area of need. My daughter’s math grade has improved tremendously. She had a low “D” in Math and now she has a high “C,” which is very close to a “B.”

P5 stated, “I enrolled my son so that he could get involved with a variety of activities.” This parent was not sure how much CCLC was helping the son, but said it keeps him off the streets. This parent has to work full-time and gets home late sometimes. P6 stated she thinks the program has helped the son, especially when it comes to

socializing. She admitted that she had not been involved with the school activities, but believed parental involvement was very important for the well-being of the child.

I then asked the parents, “What are your recommendations for teachers who want to increase parental involvement?” P1 replied:

For the teachers who want to increase parent involvement, they should have activities where the parent can be involved with their child. Weekly trackers are used to show the child’s progress and awards for the children with the most progress each week.

P2 replied, “The 21st Century [ASP] has helped my child in unbelievable ways. She is now excited about math class and her attitude toward other kids is great as well. I will be signing her up next year.” Both parents and teachers expressed approval for the activities that were designed for student engagement. The activities included reading activities that also served to improve the students’ social skills.

Summary of Themes

Following the analysis of the teachers' and parents' interview transcripts, five major themes emerged. The five themes were: (a) building literacy skills (b) ensuring academic success on state-mandated tests; (c) more parental involvement is needed, (d) need to improve math and reading skills, and (e) activities designed for student engagement. Themes were presented using direct quotes from T1-T6 and parents as P1-P6. The term “literacy skills” was mentioned by four of the six teachers interviewed. Teachers also addressed students’ math and reading skills giving rise to the theme of building literacy skills. State-mandated tests were mentioned more than 13 times, giving

credence to Theme 2. For Theme 3, nearly all of the teachers indicated that the state-mandated test results guided their instructions. A need to improve math and reading skills was consistently mentioned. Two of the six teachers indicated a need for students to improve their reading skills. These highlighted expressions emerged Theme 4. Teachers were asked to describe the type of activities offered in the ASP to engage students in reading. All of the teachers and parents expressed that the CCLC offered a variety of activities designed to engage the students giving rise to theme 5. All acknowledged they had seen improvement in reading.

Document Analysis

The information gathered from parents and teachers relevant to the type of activities and student engagement that the program offered was corroborated by reviewing a handbook provided by the school. By reviewing the handbook provided by the ASP Program Director, I was able to review and gain a better understanding of the purpose and mission of the program. According to the local Department of Education's Title IV, Part B, the 21st CCLC program is committed to offering students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs, with literacy and other educational needs. The Handbook identified additional services, programs, and activities, such as youth development activities, drug, and violence prevention programs, counseling programs, art, music, and recreation. All are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students.

The goals and mission of the ASP were listed in the Handbook: (a) To provide opportunities for academic enrichment, inclusive of tutorial services for students based in

low-performing schools; (b) To meet state and local standards in core academic subjects, such as reading. Theme 2 was aligned with the stated goal in the handbook. One of the goals of CCLC listed in the handbook was to offer families with students in CCLC opportunities to succeed in literacy-related classes. The teachers acknowledged that most of their students were deficient in literacy skills such as in reading and needed in math. The CCLC Handbook also addressed its policy on student attendance, scheduling, and parent participation.

Regarding discrepant data, one topic that I found in the Handbook, but was not raised during the interviews was establishing a Professional Development Plan. The Handbook stated: “Professional development will be provided by the district to the site coordinators. Staff is also welcomed to attend these monthly training. The site coordinators will provide monthly professional development to the teachers.” This discovery was significant as explained in the literature review. Price-Shingles and Place (2016) suggested that to create effective and sustainable programs, teachers must stay abreast of what is trending by participating in professional development and joining professional associations. Professional organizations that offer workshops and training for individuals who provide afterschool programs for youth can be very beneficial in sustaining a quality ASP for participants. It is unknown whether the site coordinator is holding scheduled PD for the ASP but will be researched in the future.

Evidence of Quality

In the present study, evidence of quality was presented in the selection of three data sources, a process described as triangulation. Data triangulation is the qualitative

research process using multiple sources of data to corroborate findings (Merriam, 2009; Hatch, 2002; Yin, 2009). The three data sources in this study were the teacher interviews, the parents' interviews, and document analysis. Additionally, I used member checking to allow the participants to see a summary of the typed narratives produced from the transcripts to establish the credibility of the collected data as recommended by Yin (2009). The participants indicated that their transcribed perspectives were accurately interpreted.

Summary of Outcomes

The purpose of this project study was to explore, understand, and describe the practices and perceptions of both teachers and parents of participating students enrolled in the 21st CCLC afterschool program. The study was grounded in a qualitative case study design. The data sources were the semi-structured interview of six teachers and six parents and document analysis of the ASP Handbook (see Appendix C and D). Five themes emerged: (a) building literacy skills (b) ensuring academic success on state-mandated tests; (c) more parental involvement is needed, (d) need to improve math and reading skills, and (e) activities designed for student engagement. Answers to research questions are presented next.

RQ 1

The first research question examined how teachers of the CCLC afterschool program describe their practices to improve reading achievement for low-performing students. Six teachers reported that their practices helped to improve reading. The themes generated indicated that the primary focus of the teacher practices was to (a) ensure

academic success on state-mandated tests, and (b) to build on the math and reading skills. These were the literacy skills that the teachers indicated that students were struggling with.

Aligned with the teacher practices, afterschool programs are designed to promote academic achievement as well as mitigate risk for students who attend. (Lester et al., 2020). Afterschool programs will yield better behavior and social skills, which in turn would contribute to the self-control and persistence needed in academic activities. Paluta et al. (2016) found that CCLC programs offered many educational benefits. Inclusion of providing opportunities for academically enriching learning experiences to meet the challenging state academic standards; Paluta et al. also found that stakeholders' perceptions across all domains were positive.

Teachers of the CCLC believed their practices helped to boost students' academic performance, especially students who fell behind in school and needed extra support and tutoring. Bower and Griffin (2011) support the idea that practices should include components of relationship building, and parental efficacy, as these have been shown to be effective in working with and low-income populations.

RQ 2

The second research question examined how parents of students enrolled in CCLC described their involvement to improve reading achievement for low-performing students? The key theme that emerged was that more parental involvement is needed. The parents admitted to having limited parental involvement. Parental involvement is essential to improve academic achievement. The literature defined parental involvement

as supporting student academic achievement or participating in school-initiated functions (Bower & Griffin, 2011). The literature also lauded parental involvement as an effective strategy to increase student achievement, but as the parents and teachers indicated, ASPs still struggle with ways to effectively involve parents of low-income families. Consistent with the findings, Leddy (2018) noted that many parents often have long work hours, hold multiple jobs, and have other family responsibilities that conflict with school or meeting hours.

RQ 3

The third research question examined how teachers and parents describe efforts to collaborate to improve reading achievement for students enrolled in the ASP. The findings suggested that the teachers and parents constantly worked together for the betterment of the children. Each month the teachers provided workshops for parents. These actions clearly demonstrated parent/teacher collaboration. Collaborative involvement infers that parents will be kept informed and encouraged to participate in their children's schools and education (Leddy, 2018). Parents who sense that the school's staff and administration truly want to establish collaboration will become more involved. This research for parental involvement for families of the CCLC is certainly a beginning, but more research is needed to explore exactly how to best facilitate and foster greater informal involvement within the school and with parents.

Project Deliverable

As an outcome of the data collection and based on the findings, I developed a Professional Development Planning project. The perceptions of the teachers and parents

reported in the findings indicated that a PD program was needed to demonstrate strategies on how teachers and parents may collaborate to improve reading achievement for students enrolled in the ASP. Price-Shingles and Place (2016) suggested that to create effective and sustainable programs, teachers must stay abreast of what is trending by participating in professional development. Professional development workshops and training for individuals who work with CCLC afterschool programs can be very beneficial in sustaining a quality ASP (Price-Shingles & Place, 2016). The project is explained in detail in Section 3.

Section 3: The Project

The ABC 21st CCLC Handbook indicated that the site coordinators will provide monthly professional development to the teachers. In furtherance of the handbook policies and guidelines, I designed this professional development project specifically for teachers with a focus on strategies that teachers can use to promote and improve parent involvement. The professional development project was conceived based on the teacher and parent interview data obtained from the project study. It was created on the premise that parents are an untapped resource in the educational process of their children (Latunde, 2017). The key tenet is that when parents participate, they will encourage their children to do well academically and attend ASPs.

Project Purpose

The purpose of this PD project was to develop and describe a professional development plan for teachers designed to promote and improve parental involvement at the CCLC. Teacher preparation programs do not always adequately prepare teachers with the skills and strategies they need to collaborate with parents and communities of afterschool learners. Because teachers arrive in classrooms with varying levels of content knowledge and communication skills, professional development is warranted (Collier et al., 2017). Flexible and collaborative professional development programs are empowering for teachers, making them likely to implement change in their practice (Collier et al., 2017).

Project Goal

The goal of this project was twofold: First, to develop a professional development plan for CCLC afterschool teachers that provide opportunities for them to partake in training activities geared toward presenting strategies needed to effectively involve parent participation. Second, to provide an actionable professional development plan that aligns with the district goals and state standards. All CCLC programs must annually identify the professional development needed to accomplish the ABC school improvement goals and objectives.

Rationale

The specific genre selected for this project is professional development training for teachers. Parental involvement was recognized by the parents and teachers as significantly important to the academic success of the students. Yet many teachers do not always receive the training they need to effectively involve parents (Blackman & Mahon, 2016). This project genre was selected because teacher training is essential to work to engage parents and boost student achievement. To create effective and sustainable programs, teachers must stay abreast of what is trending by participating in professional development (Price-Shingles & Place, 2016). The analysis showed that only two of the six parents reported involvement with the ASP. The PD may provide teachers with knowledge and activities of how to promote and improve parental involvement.

A critical link exists between parent involvement and student achievement and is well documented by decades of research (Anghel-Stănilă, 2019; Blackman & Mahon, 2016). Many educational reform programs often include parent involvement in their

goals, using student achievement as the measure of success. During the document analysis of the CCLC Handbook, I discovered that a professional development plan was expected of the site coordinator. The handbook stated, “The site coordinators will provide monthly professional development to the teachers.” Professional development was deemed to be a significant component of the CCLC policies to establish a quality program. Afterschool programs have unique needs, and professional development is one way to assist teachers in their quest to promote student learning (Bradshaw, 2015).

To address the issue of professional development as outlined in the CCLC Handbook, I developed an evidence-based professional development plan entitled “Teacher Strategies for Promoting Parental Involvement.” This project will offer a professional development plan for promoting parental involvement at the CCLC. The aim is to promote an effective professional development plan to increase parental involvement and enhance the child’s academic achievement.

Review of the Literature

The focus of this literature review is current research studies related to the professional development project for teachers on strategies to increase parent involvement in the CCLC. Most of the information was gathered from Walden University databases and Google Scholar. The search was mainly limited to dates ranging from 2017 to 2022. Earlier years were included when discussing theories, classical, or original works. The search strategy depended on using various search terms inclusive of but not limited to the following: *promoting parent involvement*, *parenting styles*, *parenting influences*, and *professional development*.

Theoretical Review

It would be a challenge to discuss parental involvement in any context without conducting a theoretical review. To understand concepts of parental involvement practices, one must have a good understanding of theories of parental involvement (Blackman & Mahon, 2016). The premise is that theories help researchers understand the links between family and school interaction and attempt to identify the reasons for high and low parent participation. To date, several theories were identified in the literature to help explain parental involvement.

Epstein's key components of parental involvement serve as a principal framework for this professional development project. The six key components are parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community (Gu, 2017). For parental involvement to be most effective, communication must be two-directional from schools to parents and from parents to schools (Vance, 2018).

Epstein's integrated theory of family-school relationships was supported by other researchers. For example, Bąk-Średnicka (2018) claimed that family-school connections are dependent on teachers' and parents' practices. The Epstein model of overlapping family and school spheres revealed that true partnership is possible when there are frequent cooperative efforts and clear, close communication between parents and teachers in a comprehensive program involving the six types of parent involvement:

- Type 1: Parenting supporting parents to create home environments enhancing a child's development;

- Type 2: Communicating informing parents about school programs and a child's progress.
- Type 3: Volunteering encouraging parents to help in school events
- Type 4: Instructing parents how to help a child with homework and develop their talents.
- Type 5: Encouraging parents to participate in the school committee.
- Type 6: Collaborating with the community for the benefit of the community, children, and school (Bağ-Şrednickan, 2018; Gu, 2017).

Parental Involvement Defined

Parental involvement is a multidimensional concept wherein parents can get involved in many ways to help their children achieve in school (Wang & Cai, 2017).

Parental involvement is any interaction between a parent and the school that enhances a child's development (Jaiswal, 2017), such as participation or inclusion of parents or guardians in their children's education (Perriell, 2015). However, there is a distinction between parental involvement and parental engagement. When parents bring children to school or formally attend parents' school meetings that is called *parental involvement*.

Parental engagement occurs when parents are actively involved in their child's learning in homework or online activities (Jaiswal, 2017; Ünlü Çetin, 2020). Further, home-based involvement is described as including motivational activities such as supporting, socializing, and training children at home to read and do mathematics (Hill et al., 2018). School-based involvement may include volunteering at school, helping with afterschool and extracurricular activities, and attending parent-teacher conferences.

Parental involvement may mean many things to different researchers. However, for this project, the term will be used broadly to include any form of parent participation in activities that support their children's schooling by attending school functions, volunteering, and responding to school obligations, such as parent-teacher meetings and parent workshops (Jaiswal, 2017). Aside from actively tutoring their children at home, parents can also serve as advocates for the school, volunteer to help in school activities, or assist in the classroom. Regardless of how researchers define parental involvement, there is a consensus among researchers that parental involvement can make a positive difference at all ages and result in positive outcomes (Jaiswal, 2017; Pattison & Dierking, 2019). As such, several strategies for increasing parent involvement were developed.

Parental Involvement Strategies

Parental involvement is directly related to children's academic achievement (Lara & Saracostti, 2019). Many parents perceive afterschool educational experiences as being different from those found within the regular school day and this may positively shape a parent's attitude toward parental involvement. One way of increasing parent involvement is by educating prospective and current teachers on the importance of parental involvement (Bradshaw, 2015). Other strategies that include the following:

- Maintain regular contact with parents through positive phone calls or emails. phone calls.
- Hold parent-student exchange day for each year,
- Create a parent handbook of guidelines and tips.
- Establish a school-wide communication plan

- Provide a welcome program for new students and their parents
- Involve the parents in the assessment of school policies and practices
- Encourage the parents to get involved with the child's homework or family-centered project to work on together at home.
- Maintain a friendly and inviting school environment. (Bradshaw, 2015)

Teachers should also seek to empower the parents of struggling readers by providing them with hands-on strategies so that they could take on the role of reading coach at home (Brown et al., 2019). One strategy suggested by Brown et al. (2019) was coaching parents via roundtable discussion. The purpose of the roundtable discussion was two-fold. First, to model the read-aloud to the parents so that they gained insight as to what makes interactions between the parent and child meaningful. Second, to provide the parents with opportunities to engage with their child while practicing with other parents. The key premise is that parent involvement contributes to children's overall educational achievement as well as their literacy development (Brown, 2016; Brown et al., 2019).

Afterschool programs are designed to promote academic achievement and youth development as well as mitigate risk for students who attend (Lester et al, 2020; Whitson et al., 2020). Regarding the role of teachers, To promote beneficial parent involvement, a change in thinking is required of the educators in how they work with parents (Link, 2018). To create such, teachers should consider a progressive plan to increase parent involvement. Today, schools often communicate with parents using the school's website. The school's website is a parent's window to the school (Gu, 2017). There are critical features for parental use to increase their involvement. The information that is presented

on school websites reflects the school's perceptions, understanding, and ideas of what is important to convey to the parents and others visiting the website (Goodall, (2016).

Common Barriers

Parents indicated that the lack of time, no knowledge of how to contribute to the child's education, unwelcoming atmosphere, and low literacy level of parents were common barriers for participation (Jaiswal, 2017). Gu (2017) believed that parents' negative perceptions of teachers and schools can be linked to many factors, of which lack of information and communication channels between schools and home is the most critical. Blackman and Mahon (2016) noted that sometimes negative parental involvement may be influenced by personal life issues or external factors outside of a parent's control. This suggests the need for teachers to be more discerning when intervening with parents whose levels of involvement are less than desirable.

Student success and achievement in afterschool programs depend on caring adults who go above and beyond to make children feel that they are special and can achieve anything (Shea, 2019). Different family structure types were associated with differential levels of parental involvement in the school lives of their children (Myers & Myers, 2015). There is a consensus that children's educational outcomes are better when parents are highly involved in school settings (Tay et al., 2018); however, Myers and Myers (2015) suggested that differences in family structure are associated with the child's educational outcomes. Aside from different family structure types, it can be a challenge when the program brings together children from different cultural, racial, and

socioeconomic backgrounds (Chaparro, 2020). Families of afterschool students with different needs, concerns, and demands can be a challenge for teachers and the school.

Getting parents involved in their children's learning is just as important as the teacher teaching students. Studies have revealed that when parents are involved in their children's education, the higher their children's success rate will be (Ahmad et al., 2021; Cheng & Chen, 2018; Kim & Riley, 2021; Yung-hsun Cheng & Yu-chi Chen, 2018). As previously noted, many parents do not actively involve themselves in their children's schooling due to their busy schedules and the element of time (Chaparro, 2020). Rather than always face to face, Yung-hsun Cheng and Yu-chi Chen proposed that schools use the social networking platform and establish parent-teacher texting. In any event, parents and teachers should be encouraged to work together to strengthen the relationships and communication between schools and families.

Professional Development Planning

The overall goal of professional development is to boost teachers' awareness of the value of engaging with parents of students enrolled in CCLC. Brasili and Allen (2019) noted that with the increasing demand for afterschool programs, the need for trained educators and staff members also increases. Therefore, the important question for this project is: What professional development plan can afterschool teachers or school administrators use to increase or improve upon parental involvement in the CCLC afterschool program?

Professional development is vital to the success of afterschool programs and should help afterschool staff members to address the parental involvement problem and

student learning needs (Jaiswal, 2017). Access to high-quality, accessible, and inexpensive professional development provides a foundation for implementing high-quality programming (Brasili & Allen, 2019; Bose et al., 2021). If professional development is implemented properly, it can enhance and facilitate staff performance and knowledge. Besides, it may improve student learning outcomes. During the professional development planning process, any areas should be identified that may assist professional development efforts to ensure that professional development is effective and of high quality.

Many afterschool program teachers recognize the need for professional development; however, there is a gap between good intention and the actual application of PD (Bradshaw, 2015). To address this issue, Bradshaw recommended five key factors to assist afterschool staff to implement professional development. Bradshaw (2015) described the factors and the significance of each factor in the following ways:

Time

Adequate time is needed for afterschool staff members to become comfortable with a new initiative relating to PD. The key premise is that more time is needed to learn new skills, practices, procedures, or about the program in general. Time is an essential condition for instruction, collaboration, and practice (Bradshaw, 2015).

Expertise

In determining the expertise needs, it is important to consider the specific knowledge requirements of the site and which professional development models are appropriate for the program's needs. Schools should include afterschool staff in

professional development planning. Other partners, such as businesses or community organizations should be considered to provide valuable expertise (Bradshaw, 2015; Farrell et al., 2019).

Access

Access to easily available PD opportunities is needed by afterschool staff members. One way to facilitate access is through strategic partnerships, such as schools, community associations, or colleges and universities (Bradshaw, 2015; Farrell et al., 2019). Delacruz and Guerra (2019) suggested that many professional development initiatives can benefit from university or higher education partnerships.

Resources

In planning professional development, afterschool leaders must be able to assess resources, inclusive of financial support, teaching materials, and technology (Guskey, 2014). Online professional development is one option (Bradshaw, 2015). Online professional development is cost-effective and can provide consistent high-quality training. Training delivered to afterschool program leaders including feedback on performance, coaching, and the business-as-usual status quo result in different kinds of school and program implementation; thus, targeted investment to improve outcomes in low-SES communities is essential to support the students (Farrell et al., 2019).

Support

The most important factor to be considered in professional development planning is support, which involves helping teachers to accept and approach PD initiatives positively. One form of support described by Bradshaw (2015) included administrators,

volunteers, and all members of the team. The aim was to ensure that staff members felt that administrators value their implementation and participation in professional development. After school administrators should seek to promote a positive view of professional development (Bradshaw, 2015; Budd et al., 2020). That is, in support of professional development, the site administrators should provide leadership and seek to procure essential resources.

Professional Development Opportunities

For many afterschool teachers, adequate time is needed to partake in professional development. A variety of professional development opportunities that be available to teachers, specifically face-to-face and online methodologies (Nelson & Bohanon, 2019). Traditionally, professional development provided to classroom teachers has been presented in a one-size-fits-all face-to-face format. Face-to-face professional development commonly provides non-differentiated content and is typically provided by school districts for the whole staff (Kebritchi et al., 2017; Nelson & Bohanon, 2019; Simone et al., 2019). However, teachers currently struggle to balance their time, work schedules, and personal lives, making it difficult for them to engage in timed professional development regularly and effectively.

One alternative offered by researchers is an online professional development workshop (Gu, 2017; Kebritchi et al., 2017). Frerichs et al. (2018) argued that learners bring a unique reality to their learning experiences. Adult learners feel the need to apply their learning immediately, and value independence and self-direction in their learning. Also, Frerichs et al. stressed that through web-based learning, adult learners can work

independently online, can work at their own pace, and during a time of their choosing. Web lessons can feature written content, visuals, and downloadable handouts. Frerichs et al. also suggested that professional development experiences should focus on approaches, methods, and processes.

Project Description

The professional development project genre was selected for the sole purpose of providing opportunities for both site coordinators, teachers, and non-instructional staff to partake in training geared toward improving parental involvement at the CCLC. All staff and support partners are welcome to attend the sessions. I will present the professional development plan to the site coordinator, who in turn will provide monthly professional development to the teachers based on the web-based plan.

The purpose of this professional development plan was to present a research-proven professional development program on parental involvement designed specifically for teachers and staff of CCLC. Research indicated a link between parent involvement and student achievement, yet teachers do not always get the professional training they need to effectively involve parents. The goal of this project is to help teachers improve parent involvement in the CCLC afterschool program. The overall learning outcome is student achievement. Teachers should understand how to (a) engage and involve parents to improve student achievement; (b) implement strategies to support parent involvement, (c) gain confidence in their ability to work effectively with parents, and (d) present evidence-based strategies to help students improve reading.

The professional development plan was guided by the results from the present study. In appreciation of the CCLC teaching staff, I recommended that the professional development be conducted online via the school's website. This resource is readily available to all CCLC staff members. The professional development was divided into four segments: (a) How and Why to Include Parents in Teaching Reading Strategies; Reading Comprehension for Parents/Vocabulary; Phonics/Fluency; and Evaluation. The objective is for teachers to build skills and implement strategies to improve student reading achievement,

Project Evaluation Plan

Evaluation is a systematic process used to determine if the implemented learning activities are achieving their intended purpose (Fenton & Winger, 2018). The goal of the project evaluation plan is to measure the knowledge gained and the potential for the transfer of learning to actual situations. The aim is to identify specific ways to improve professional development and make strategic decisions about what change needs to be made moving forward.

An evaluation should occur on five levels: (a) initial reaction, (b) knowledge and skills gained, (c) organization support and change, (d) application to practice, and (e) outcomes (Frerichs et al., 2018). Teachers will be asked to self-evaluate and complete an open-ended assessment at the end of the segments to document their understanding of the contents. This summative evaluation will tell the site coordinator how effective the professional development was in meeting the goals. Additionally, informal assessments may take place in the form of professional discussions among staff and the site

coordinators during site-level meetings. The key stakeholders are the school and district administrator, the CCLC program director, CCLC teachers and parents, and support staff.

Project Implications

Without the right support, the prospect of teaching in the CCLC program can be daunting for even the most experienced teachers. Professional development is vital to the success of the CCLC program. Students, parents, and support staff all benefit when the faculty develop the skills to lead engaging afterschool classes that create meaningful and highly valuable learning experiences.

Social change encompasses a commitment to individual and societal well-being, and the opportunity for people to determine their own societal needs. In addressing social change, this project will aid in empowering instructors to teach through a combination of online training opportunities. With this professional project, instructors will become more social conscious, skillful, and feel comfortable taking advantage of the entire learning process.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

Adult learners feel the need to apply their learning immediately, and they value independence and self-direction in their learning (Frerichs et al., 2018). The presence of and worry about the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way people can carry out their lives. Because of this international crisis occurring today, this web-based professional training provides the flexibility where teachers can take PD training at any time and from anywhere. The participants will be able to work independently online at their own pace, and at a time of their choosing. The web lessons also feature written content, visuals, and downloadable handouts.

Like any new project study, there were some limitations. The deliverable was not interactive, and questions could not be answered in real time. Learning from an online platform did require the learner to understand online technology such as knowing how to navigate the screen. The participants also had to figure out how to maneuver around the PPT or text. Without certain skills, online learning may become stressful for some.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

A core part of the professional development plan was for CCLC teachers to find innovative ways to promote and foster a positive parent/teacher to support improving reading achievement. As a future alternative project, the focus could be on the parents. In alignment with the ABC handbook, an online PD could be developed with a focus on the parents. Parents should be encouraged to participate whenever possible in the activities at the CCLC. As previously noted, many parents do not actively involve themselves in their

children's schooling due to their busy schedules and the element of time (Chaparro, 2020). Online PD with a focus on teaching parents the importance of parental involvement and simple ways to become involved may be effective. A face-to-face PD may be a preferred way to carry out the PD once the pandemic is controlled.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

The important question for this project development was "What professional development plan can afterschool teachers or school administrators use to address the problem of the study?" I selected the professional genre because the literature reviewed indicated that professional development is vital to the success of ASPs and should help afterschool staff members address the parental involvement and support improved instruction of reading. What I did learn was that a quality PD program takes research and time. Time was needed to develop and learn new skills to prepare online PD, especially when preparing the resources. In planning professional development, afterschool leaders must be able to assess essential resources (Guskey, 2014). My overall objective was to ensure that teachers had a positive view of professional development and to investigate evidence-based reading strategies to use.

At the end of the PD workshop, teachers were asked to self-evaluate and complete an open-ended assessment. This summative evaluation was designed to tell me how well the teachers felt the goals of the professional development were met. I came to realize there are no quick fixes regarding developing and implementing teachers' professional development. This project may directly impact positive social change when teachers look at what they could do to foster, improve, and promote parental involvement.

As a result of planning and implementing this project, I have expanded my knowledge on the importance of providing training for teachers and how it benefits me within my work as a school counselor. My key learning experiences was learning exactly how to engage and motivate teachers in the CCLC through PD. I have also learned basic PD skills that I am willing to implement. I am going to follow the theme of the importance of involving parents in all activities to assure that students achieve reading success on state standards.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

During the rapidly evolving situation around the coronavirus (COVID-19), this PD project was considered both timely and valuable. Many face-to-face school professional development classes were converting to virtual instructor-led training. This project reflected my personal and professional growth in terms of the critical knowledge and skills gained while developing this project. I recognized from the onset that it was a complicated and sometimes difficult task. It required an in-depth understanding of the content of what was being delivered and the manner that it would be delivered. This is not the end of the journey but the beginning. I believe that positive social change results when the human and social conditions are improved for the betterment of society. I believe that with the appropriate training and education, social change can occur at many levels, including individuals, families, and communities.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

A key implication of this research is positive social change, the desired outcome for this study. It was important for teachers and other stakeholders to understand the

value of parental involvement in the CCLC program. Positive social change may be realized when (a) stakeholders begin to realize the important role that ASPs can play in increasing parental involvement in school and (b) more parents and family members are involved in their children's school. Although teachers identified parental involvement as a best practice, many schools lack the necessary resources or the time to reach out to families who may be reluctant to participate (Jabar et al., 2020). A large gap between the professed goals and the actual practices of the teachers may remain; however, ongoing PD training may help shape their practices and be a key factor in fostering parental involvement. The ASP provides a viable situation to meaningfully include parents collaborating with teachers to help improve student achievement in reading.

Research has consistently shown that when parents are involved in the child's education, outcomes are more positive (Jabar et al., 2020). I will continue to create new exercises and look for creative ways to provide teachers with the training needed to form a positive relationship with parents that may improve parental involvement at the CCLC and support student reading achievement. Not only will the individual lives of students change but their families, schools, and society in general.

Conclusion

CCLC afterschool programs have been operating for decades in communities across the United States. A central component of the ASP is the establishment of a professional development plan (PDP). According to the ASP Handbook, the ASP is to provide district-wide training opportunities to staff to include reading endorsement classes. The PDP deliverable was aligned with the district's goals and mission. The PDP

will be offered to the site coordinator who is responsible for training in the 21st CCLC Program. Research shows that high-quality afterschool programs improve students' educational outcomes, school attendance, and social and emotional learning (Smith & Bradshaw, 2017). I hope that with regular scheduled PDP, middle school students who regularly attend the afterschool program will demonstrate significant gains in standardized reading test scores. Additionally, the teachers involved in the program will help parents become more knowledgeable and thus help students improve in their academic subjects.

Based on the research conducted during the development of this project and deliverable, it is reasonable to conclude that when families become involved in their children's afterschool education, they have a better understanding of what is being taught to their children and what the child is learning. They gain more information about their children's knowledge and abilities as well as the ASP and services offered by the school. Another important achievement is that they will have specific strategies they can use with their children at home.

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Appendix A: The Project

The project is a 3-day online professional development for the CCLC Afterschool teachers and staff. It focuses on 10 research-based skills for facilitating strategies to improve parental involvement. The goal of the project is to provide self-directed, on-demand professional development for site coordinators, teachers, and non-instructional staff geared toward improving parental involvement at the 21st CCLC. All teachers and support partners (non-instructional staff and school administrators) are welcome to attend the sessions. Web Lessons are hosted by myself, the developer of the professional development following the current study of parent involvement in the local ASP. Educators who participate in this project can enroll through the local ABC school website.

Purpose

The purpose of this professional development project is to present a professional development (PD) program that uses research-proven methods to improve reading with a focus on improving parent involvement in the 21st CCLC. As a result of this workshop, participants will (a) be prepared to plan and facilitate activities that support parental involvement and (b) learn best practices in facilitating strategies that promote parental involvement in the CCLC.

Target Audience

The PD workshop is aimed at site coordinators, teachers, and staff of the 21st CCLC. The PD lessons provide afterschool instructors with the resources they need to

extend their knowledge in new ways to foster parental involvement to improve student reading achievement.

Goals for Workshop Training

The goals of the PD parental involvement program are to provide assistance and resources to facilitate the parental involvement program. The importance of parental involvement will be explained and emphasized. Issues that might prevent parental involvement will be explored, and strategies to strengthen communication between families and school will be employed, all toward better collaboration between the two.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this workshop, teachers and other participants should be able to:

1. Recall what parent involvement is all about and why it is important.
2. List obstacles and barriers to parent involvement
3. Demonstrate knowledge about the concept of parents' involvement in afterschool programs.
4. Implement strategies to improve family-school communication about reading strategies.
5. Identify and explain what strategies work in parent involvement.
6. Develop a plan for working in collaboration with parents to improve parental involvement.

Timeline

Courses are accessible to the CCLC staff at any time and on any computer, tablet, or smartphone. After registration, registrants will have access to all lessons for up to 30

days. Sessions may be completed in real-time and at the registrant's own pace. Pause any time and continue where you left off. The self-directed professional development PD workshop is designed to be completed in three days or less.

Professional Development for the 21st CCLC Afterschool Program

Please note that you can find the printable PowerPoint presentations accessing the Learning Materials tab at the end of each session. Please address your questions to latisha.jones@waldenu.edu

Session 1 on Day 1 PowerPoint/Handout

PowerPoint: Scaffolding

Handout: How and why to include parents in teaching reading strategies.

Scaffolding For Student Achievement

Presented By:
Latisha Jones-Russell




What is Scaffolding?

The Goal of Scaffolding

One of the main goals of scaffolding is to reduce the negative emotions and self-perceptions that students may experience when they get frustrated, intimidated, or discouraged when attempting a difficult task without the assistance, direction, or understanding they need to complete it.



Scaffolding




Scaffolding is a variety of instructional techniques used to move students progressively toward stronger understanding and, ultimately, greater independence in the learning process.

Scaffolding Strategies

- Show and Tell
- Tap Into Prior Knowledge
- Give Time to Talk
- Pre-Teach Vocabulary
- Use Visual Aids
- Pause, Ask Questions, Pause Review

Scaffolding Techniques

In early stage of new concept, teachers provide substantial support.

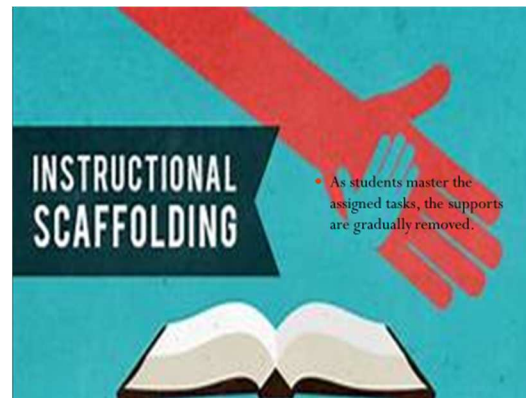
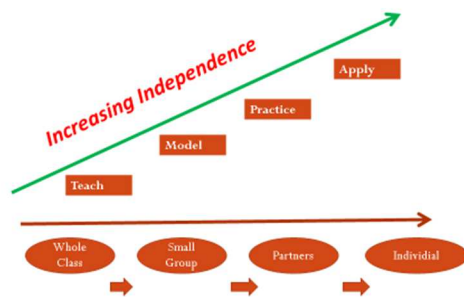
- Verbal
- Procedural
- Instructional



Verbal Scaffolding

- ✓ **Paraphrasing**
- ✓ **"Think-aloud"**
- ✓ **Reinforce contextual definitions**
- ✓ **Slowing speech**

Procedural Scaffolding



- As students master the assigned tasks, the supports are gradually removed.

Scaffolding

1. Students learn more when they are actively **engaged** in instructional tasks
2. Students become independent, self-regulated learners through instruction that is deliberately and carefully **scaffolded**.
3. Students can become more independent, self-regulated learners through instruction that is **explicit**.
4. Scaffolds allow and encourage students to take **ownership** in their own learning.



Scaffolding puts one in position to do a job.



**WRAP-UP
QUESTIONS?**

Session 2 Day 2 PowerPoint/Handout

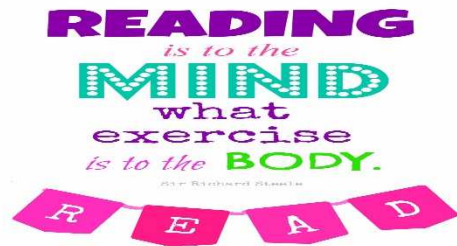
PowerPoint: Strategies for Reading in the Content Area

Handouts: Reading Comprehension for Parents/Vocabulary

**Strategies for Reading
in the Content Areas**



*Presented by
Latisha Jones-Russell*



ACTIVITY

Use three different strategies for teaching in content areas. Teachers

**Why teach reading in the
content areas?**

Students will be able to read
about the content with greater
understanding.

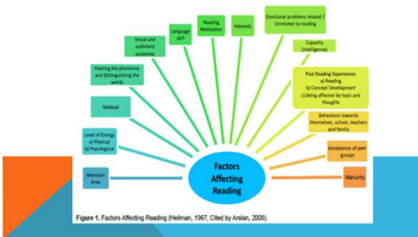
3 Types of Reading Problems

- Lack of cognitive abilities...comprehension, vocabulary, word recognition, fluency, automaticity
- Negative attitudes toward reading...
- Don't know how to read different kinds of text... they read social studies like science, lack the ability to stick with difficult text, lack stamina to find or complete a text

Reading is the key to success in all content areas!



Factors Affecting Student Performance on the Reading Task



Students often know how to read, they just don't use (or know how to use) effective strategies to get the full meaning from the text they read.

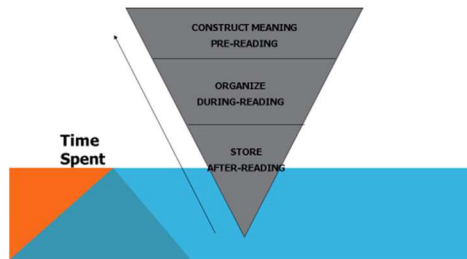


3 Phases of Reading:

1. Pre-Reading
2. During-Reading
3. Post-Reading



LEARNING/READING AND RETENTION



TOOLS USING CUES, VISUALS, AND TEXT ORGANIZERS

- Using text cues
- Using pictures in the book
- Providing graphic organizers
- Creating graphic organizers
- What's interesting/what's important



TOOLS TO USE TO CONNECT NEW KNOWLEDGE TO PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

- How sure are you?
- Ready-Set-Go-Whoa
- Connections, Points, and Questions
- KWL
- ABC Brainstorming
- Semantic Mapping

DAY 2 HANDOUTS

Morning/Afternoon Informational Session

Reading Comprehension for Parents and Vocabulary handouts will be given to the teachers.

Strategies and techniques to utilize at home will be discussed.

To increase student understanding of the content area, help them become better readers of content area text



WRAP-UP QUESTIONS?



Session 3 Day 3 PowerPoint/Handout

PowerPoint: Teaching Grade Level Text

Handout: Phonics/Fluency

Who are you as a teacher?

Introduce your most hilarious teacher moment

Teaching Grade Level Texts to Struggling Readers

Presented By:
Latisha Jones-Russell

Tools for your toolbox

- Mini-lessons
 - Concepts of print
 - Figuring out unknown words
- Comprehension strategies
 - Connecting reading material to your own life
 - Retelling story orally
 - Making inferences
 - Drawing conclusions
 - Summarizing story
 - Distinguishing fact from opinion

Tools For Your Toolbox

- Read Aloud
- Individualized support and instruction (Through guided reading and workstations)
- Vocabulary building
 - Front load vocabulary that students will have difficulty with
- Decoding strategies
 - Chunking words into portions that they know
 - Finding root words



Then What?

**Show
Support
Prompt
Reinforce
Observe**



What do I do now?

- Find out what the child:
 - > Can do
 - > Can almost do
 - > Cannot do
- THEN...
 - Decide what this child needs to learn next

DAY 3 Handouts

- Morning/Afternoon Informational Session
- Strategies for Teaching Phonics at Home and Strategies for Teaching Fluency will be discussed. Handouts will be given to the teachers.

Ask yourself.....

- Did the child take on the strategy or strategic behavior that you have been working on?
- If yes  Reinforce, praise
- If no  Repeat modeling, supporting, prompting

Work Time

- During this time, you can:
- plan
- collaborate with peers
- practice implementing strategies

Exit Ticket and Next Steps

- What is one strategy that you intend to use in your classroom? What will you need to support you in implementation?
- Share out

WRAP-UP
QUESTIONS?

Evaluation: Help me to learn more about how teachers and staff like you assessed this PD. Complete this brief evaluation tool or contact

Appendix B: Interview Questions for Teachers and Parents

The individual semi-structured interview questions were selected for the current study because they provide the opportunity for me to generate rich data through the voices of the teacher and parent participants, essential for gaining insight into their perceptions. The interview format for this study was based on the following research questions (see Appendix C).

1. RQ 1: How do teachers of the CCLC afterschool program describe their practices to improve reading achievement for low-performing students?
2. RQ 2: How do parents of students enrolled in CCLC describe their involvement to improve reading achievement for low-performing students?
3. RQ3: How do teachers and parents describe efforts to collaborate to improve reading achievement for students enrolled in CCLC?

Teacher Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your role or responsibilities in the CCLC afterschool program? RQ1
2. How would you describe your instruction and experience in the afterschool? program? RQ1
3. Of the students who attend the program, have you noticed any changes in their reading achievement? Explain. RQ1
4. If you could change some things relevant to your practice, what would you change? RQ1

5. How is an instruction in the CCLC program different (or the same) from instruction during the regular school day? RQ1
6. How would you describe the type of activities for students in the afterschool program in terms of student engagement in reading? RQ1
7. How have parents been involved in the afterschool program? Explain. RQ3
8. How do you communicate with parents and how often? Explain. RQ3
9. What have I not asked that I should have asked?

Parents Interview Questions

1. How often does your child attend the program?
2. How would you describe the type of activities provided by your child in the afterschool program? R2
3. Talk about some of the challenges and successes you have encountered with the program. RQ 2
4. Since your child has started participating, have your expectations matched what the program offers? RQ3
5. In what ways are you involved with the CCLC? RQ 2
6. What academic gains, if any, have you seen in your child who attended the afterschool program? Explain.
7. What advice would you offer to other parents to encourage their afterschool involvement? RQ 2 and RQ3
8. What are your recommendations for teachers?

Appendix C: Interview Questions Related to Research Questions

Summary of Interview Questions/Research Questions

Interview Question	Research Question (RQ)
How would you describe your role or responsibilities in the CCLC afterschool program?	RQ 1: How do teachers of the CCLC afterschool program describe their practices to improve reading achievement for low-performing students?
How would you describe your instruction and experience in the afterschool? program?	
Of the students who attend the program, have you noticed any changes in their reading achievement? Explain.	RQ 2: How do parents of students enrolled in CCLC describe their involvement to improve reading achievement for low-performing students?
How would you describe the type of activities provided by your child in the afterschool program?	
Talk about some of the challenges and successes you have encountered with the program.	

Since your child has started participating, have your expectations matched what the program offers?

RQ3L How do teachers and parents describe efforts to collaborate to improve reading achievement for students enrolled in CCLC

In what ways are you involved with the CCLC?

What academic gains, if any, have you seen in your child who attended the afterschool program? Explain.

What advice would you offer to other parents to encourage their afterschool involvement?

Appendix D: ABC County Schools CCLC Handbook (2017-2018)

Welcome to our after-school educational programs. We are looking forward to a great year at our 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program! The following information will help you to understand the operations of our sites. Should you have any concerns regarding the program at any time, please feel free to call.

Mission Statement: The mission of ABC County Schools is to prepare students to become responsible, respectful, independent learners equipped with the critical thinking skills necessary to compete in our global society.

Locations and hours: The 21st CCLC program operates five days a week during the academic school year. The program hours for each site is listed below.

Goals of the program: All program activities are funded by a 21st CCLC competitive grant funded by the Mississippi Department of Education through the U.S. Department of Education. Therefore, all program services are provided to your child free of charge. The goals of the 21st CCLC Program are to:

Provide opportunities for academic enrichment, including providing tutorial services to help students, particularly students who attend low-performing schools, to meet state and local student academic achievement standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and mathematics.

Offer students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities, such as youth development activities, drug and violence prevention programs, counseling programs, art, music, and recreation programs, technology education programs and

character education programs that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students.

Offer families of students served by community learning centers opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

Attendance Policy: If your child is enrolled in the 21st CCLC program, he/she is expected to attend and stay the entire program time each day. If a child is absent, we will make every attempt to determine why the child is not present. If your child is going to be absent, please call the school office and ask that the site coordinator be notified. Once a child is enrolled, attendance will be monitored and inconsistent or sporadic attendance will be documented and placed in the student's file. Students are expected to follow the school site's policy on attendance. The program sites are able to serve a limited number of students. Usually there is a waiting list for students who qualify for the program. If a student is not going to attend regularly, that "spot" will be made available to the students on the waiting list.

Scheduling: Students who participate in the after-school program are provided with 30 to 45 minutes per day for homework assistance and/or tutoring. Enrichment classes will be offered weekly at each site. All tutoring sessions are conducted by certified teachers, or other program staff directly supervised by certified teachers. All volunteers not regularly employed by a governmental agency or nonprofit community organization are subject to background checks and screenings as per the LCS district policy.

Parent Participation: Parents are encouraged to participate whenever possible in the activities at the school site. Parents have unlimited access to all areas of the building used for activities during hours of operation. However, due to staff responsibilities and schedules, parents are asked to make appointments with staff when it is necessary to engage in any lengthy conversations. Scheduled appointments allow the staff to focus on you and your child. If you have any concerns or questions at any time, please feel free to bring them to the appropriate staff member when they occur. Often problems can be addressed when they are little, before they grow into bigger issues. We want the relationship between you and the center to be positive. Parents are also encouraged to:

- Participate in all appropriate activities & programs that support the education of their child.
- Get involved with the Advisory Committee and help improve the program •
Make contact with other parents to encourage participation.
- Attend monthly site-sponsored parent trainings and workshops. Six (6) Family Literacy events are required. The sign in and out sheets identify attendance.
- Help plan and participate in healthy activities as appropriate.

Professional Development Plan: The 21st CCLC program manager will communicate the learning priorities by requiring the site coordinators to administer surveys based on student learning to staff members at their schools. The site coordinators will provide the results to the program manager who will then develop the Professional Development calendar. Additional training dates and topics will be added throughout the year as needed. Teachers were asked to self-evaluate and select training options in

support of their professional growth. Additional data will be collected during course evaluations, which site coordinators complete after every professional development event. These tell the program manager the effectiveness of the training and show the site coordinators connections between training and classroom practices. Informal assessments will take place in the form of professional discussions among staff and the site coordinators during site- level meetings. Site walkthroughs conducted by the program manager will show patterns of teaching practices, which also display instructional strengths and needs. Opportunities for both instructional and non-instructional staff to partake of training activities that are geared toward enhancing instruction will be provided on a monthly basis. Professional development will be provided by the district to the site coordinators. Staff are also welcomed to attend these monthly trainings. The site coordinators will provide monthly professional development to the teachers.

Outside of the 21st CCLC program, the ABC provides district-wide training opportunities to staff to include reading endorsement classes and gifted endorsement classes. Staff may also partake in district opportunities. The 21st CCLC professional development plan is aligned with the district goals and state standards. All schools annually identify the professional development needed to accomplish school improvement goals and objectives. Teachers and administrators develop professional development plans based on classroom and school data from the previous year as well as current year student data. These plans focus on goals for student achievement and include professional development opportunities. The 21st CCLC Program will follow this plan as

well. The following site coordinator training will be offered by the 21st CCLC Program.

Additional dates may be added.