LITERATURE REVIEW OF ARTS-BASED AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS IN AT RISK HIGH SCHOOLS

FINAL REPORT

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Executive Summary

This project investigated the current research surrounding arts-based after-school programs aimed at at-risk secondary school students. It sought to determine gaps and limitations in the research base and identify best practices evident in after-school programs similar to the UNITY Club.

This project was informed by a number of different data sources. Though primarily a literature review, programmatic documents were also analyzed in order to better understand the history and philosophy behind UNITY and UNITY Club, and how the program is currently being implemented.

Articles were selected for inclusion in the literature review if they met the following criteria:

- an empirical study, evaluation or synthesis of past research on after-school programs; and
- involved students in a secondary school setting.

Apart from some seminal studies conducted in the 1990's, the vast majority of references included in this review were published between 2000 – 2013. The final selection of references contained 123 sources.

The following 13 best practices emerged from the literature surrounding arts-based after-school programs in a secondary school setting:

Best Practices
1. The program has a clear mission and is organized around achieving those goals.
2. The program has a safe, positive and healthy climate.
3. The program recruits a diverse mix of youth to participate.
4. The program should address barriers to participation.
5. The program hires, trains and retains high quality staff.
6. The program has a flexible curriculum and has content that is engaging and meaningful to students.
7. The program is rooted in educational theory and uses the arts as an avenue for improving other competencies.
8. The program has a leadership development component.
9. The program has an anger management component.
10. The program has a self-efficacy component.
11. The program includes stress management training.
12. The program establishes connections with families of participants, the school and the community.
13. The program practices frequent and ongoing evaluation.

These best practices were compared with UNITY's current after-school programming. It was determined that UNITY has implemented all but one of the 13 best practices.

Considering that UNITY Club meets 12 of these 13 best practices, they should continue to deliver the programming as planned. In the future, UNITY should make attemps to supplment their

internal “one-off” evaluation activities with high quality, external evaluations to better demonstrate the impact UNITY Club is having on students, the school and communities being served.

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UNITY CHARITY

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1. Purpose of the Project

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to conduct a literature review for UNITY Charity (UNITY) that investigates the current research surrounding arts-based after-school programs aimed at at-risk secondary school students. Beyond examining the credibility and relevance of the current literature, the literature review identifies gaps and limitations in the research base and attempts to identify best practices evident in after-school programs similar to the UNITY Club program.

This report is designed to serve as an internal tool to assist in future program development. As such, the project also seeks to determine the level of alignment between UNITY's programming and the best practices that emerge from the literature. The third and final component of the study outlines the steps UNITY would need to take for the UNITY Club program to receive accreditation from an external agency, like *Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development* (Blueprints). Blueprints identifies prevention and intervention programs that meet a strict scientific standard of program effectiveness.

Research Questions

The following five research questions guided this inquiry:

1. What literature exists that investigates the efficiency and effectiveness of after-school programs that are either arts-based or focus on increasing stress management, self-efficacy and youth leadership?

2. What are some best practices in after-school programs that are either arts-based or focus on increasing stress management, self-efficacy and youth leadership?

3. What are some gaps in the literature?

4. How aligned is UNITY's UNITY Club after-school program with best practices identified in the literature?

5. What steps are necessary for UNITY Club to be accredited as a model or promising program by an external agency, like Blueprints?

2. Methodology and Approach

Document Review

The data collection process began with a review of program-related documents provided by UNITY. The document review was carried out prior to conducting the literature search in order to better understand the history and philosophy behind UNITY and UNITY Club, and how the program is currently being implemented. The document review informed many of the conclusions and recommendations found when comparing UNITY Club to the best practices that were identified in the literature.

The following documents were reviewed:

- UNITY Club - After School Program Logic Model;
- Unity Club – After School Program Lesson Plans;
- UNITY Charity Annual Report 2012;
- UNITY Charity 2011/2012 Program Evaluation;
- Maclean's Article ("A head-spinning source of inspiration" by Mike Doherty – Thursday, July 26, 2012)

There were also 53 video clips on the UNITY YouTube channel at the time of writing. All of these video clips were also included in the document review.

Literature Review

The purpose of this review is to synthesize best practices from the academic literature surrounding arts-based after-school programs and compare them with UNITY's current programming. This final report is designed to serve as an internal tool to assist in future program development, program revision, and evaluation. For that reason, apart from some seminal studies published in the late 1990s, the vast majority of the selected references cover the period 2000-2013. This was done to ensure that the literature selected for review is both current and relevant. A key words, search terms and a list of the databases searched for selecting potential studies or reports for inclusion in this literature review can be found in *Appendix A*: Key Words and Search Terms.

References were initially selected if they involved the study or evaluation of after-school programs in secondary school settings. Though the focus was on identifying academic literature, studies published in a variety of sources were all sought out for inclusion in this review. This included peer reviewed journal articles, books and project reports produced by government and professional organizations. This initial search produced 103 unique references.

The references were then reduced to ensure they met the selection criteria. Final selection criteria were that selected references had to be either an empirical study, evaluation or synthesis of past research on after-school or similar programming involving students in a secondary school setting. This second step in the search process resulted in 19 peer-reviewed journal articles and 11 professional reports being excluded as they focused on programs geared towards elementary school-aged youth.

At this point the literature search was expanded to further identify published articles that reported on evaluations of after-school programs focused on building stress management skills, empathy, leadership and self-efficacy in their participants. This step in the process also involved reviewing literature related to the following three programs that have been accredited by Blueprints:

- Project Towards No Drug Abuse;
- Be Proud, Be Responsive; and
- Wyman's Teen Outreach Program

Of the 44 programs that Blueprints has accredited, these are the closest to UNITY Club. All programs serve the same target populations and are solely school-based. There are other programs Blueprints has accredited for high school students, but they have mostly been delivered in a treatment centre setting or involve parents working alongside the student participants to reduce problematic behaviors and promote healthy youth development.

This process produced an additional 50 references. This means that the final selection of references produced a total of 123 references that fit the search criteria. All of the selected studies were published in English. The vast majority of empirical studies conducted on after-school programming in secondary schools are quantitative in nature. Solely quantitative studies account for 50 of the 127 references. Of these, 18 employed survey designs, 23 used quasi-experimental designs, eight were true experiments and one was based on complex quantitative modeling of an existing dataset. 23 of the references were based on solely qualitative designs. 18 of these studies relied on interviews or focus groups to generate data, while five were based on narrative designs that sought to describe the experiences of individuals and tell stories about their experiences. 10 of the selected references employed mixed-methods approaches and 22 were conceptual in nature. An additional 18 syntheses of past research (literature reviews, meta-analyses and meta-evaluations) were included in the final selection of references.

3. Summary of Findings

It became clear early in the process that research on after-school programs is an emerging field of study. At this point, there is not a single formula, or set of concrete criteria for creating and implementing a successful and effective after-school program. Few programs have been rigorously evaluated, so little is currently known about the specific programmatic features that lead to positive outcomes (Bodilly & Beckett, 2005; Durlak et al., 2010; Eccles & Templeton, 2002; Fashola, 2003; Lauer, Akiba,Wilkerson, Apthorp, Snow, & Martin-Glenn, 2006; Scott-Little et al., 2002). The current literature reveals some promising practices, but is primarily focused on determining which structural features are found in effective programs.

That aside, after reviewing the literature, a number of best practices have been identified. The vast majority of these best practices are related to the structural elements of after-school programs (i.e., human resources, participant recruitment) as this was the focus of the literature. In order to meet UNITY's programmatic needs, there are also additional sections that summarize outcomes from programs that have similar goals to UNITY Club. As such, outcomes related to after-school programs that are arts-based or focus on developing leadership, self-esteem, self-efficacy have also been included in this review.

The 13 best practices can be found in *Table 1*: **Best Practices** below.

Table 1: Best Practices

Best Practices
1. The program has a clear mission and is organized around achieving those goals.
2. The program has a safe, positive and healthy climate.
3. The program recruits a diverse mix of youth to participate.
4. The program should address barriers to participation.
5. The program hires, trains and retains high quality staff.
6. The program has a flexible curriculum and has content that is engaging and meaningful to students.
7. The program is rooted in educational theory and uses the arts as an avenue for improving other competencies.
8. The program has a leadership development component.
9. The program has an anger management component.
10. The program has a self-efficacy component.
11. The program includes stress management training.
12. The program establishes connections with families of participants, the school and the community.
13. The program practices frequent and ongoing evaluation.

Each of these best practices will be discussed in detail below. This section will close with a short description of the limitations of the literature regarding after-school programs and some future directions for research in this field.

Clear Mission and Organization

Best Practice 1:
The program has a clear mission and is organized around achieving those goals.

This best practice is supported by 21 of the references cited in this review. For instance, Granger (2008) mentions that "programs should be intentional about what they are trying to achieve" (p. 16). This is echoed by Pittman, Irby, Yohalem & Wilsom-Ahlstrom (2004). They found that, "practitioners who implement successful approaches are very intentional about what they do and how they do it" (p. 28). Programs should be organized around a small set of goals, go about achieving them in a particular manner and be clear about how participation in the program will lead to those outcomes (Jemmott, Jemmott, Braverman & Fong, 2005; Mazza, 2012; Wright, John, Livingstone, Shepherd & Duku, 2006; Zhang & Byrd, 2005). This is typically done through a logic model, mission statement, or emphasis on the program's website.

It is also worth mentioning that a number of studies examining programs accredited by Blueprints (Allen & Philliber, 2001; Allen, Philliber & Hoggson, 1990; Lisha, Sun, Rohrbach, Sprujit-Metx, Unger & Sussman, 2012; Little, Wimer, & Weiss, 2008; Sun, Sussman, Dent, & Rohrbach, 2008; Syn, Skara, Sun, Dent, & Sussman, 2006) found that effective programs demonstrate high fidelity to their program model. The authors all emphasized that this was important because high fidelity to the program model is linked to positive student outcomes.

A Safe, Positive and Healthy Climate

Best Practice 2:
The program has a safe, positive and healthy climate.

The promotion and implementation of a safe, positive and healthy climate that promotes and reinforces positive social norms as a best practice in after-school programs in a secondary school environment has overwhelming support in the literature (Anderson, Sabatelli & Trachtenberg, 2007; Cassidy & Bates, 2005; Cosden, Morrison, Albanese & Macias, 2001; Davies & Peltz, 2012; De Kanter, 2001; Nelson, McClintock, Perez-Ferguson, Shawver, & Thompson, 2008; Riggs and Greenberg, 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 1998). Huang (2001) mentions that "a positive program climate will enhance students' feelings of being safe; promote their self-esteem, self-confidence, and autonomy; develop their cognitive and affective characteristics (p. 53). Similarly, Wright, John, Ellenbogen, Offord, Duku & Rowe (2006) mention this is a common finding in literature reviews and meta-analyses in this field. They state that, "research about youth programs often emphasizes the importance of relationships, a supportive climate, and youth engagement – social processes that appear to be linked to positive developmental outcomes" (p. 351). This best practice was mentioned as a predictor of programmatic effectiveness in 32 of the articles studied.

There is also evidence to suggest that promoting a safe and caring program climate is especially beneficial for programs serving different populations. Jones and Deutsch (2013) contend that

safe and caring program climates are especially important when operating in urban and low income areas. After evaluating a number of arts-based after-school programs, Groves & Huber (2003) argue that such a non-threatening environment is a vital component of effective arts programs. Such climates provide students the opportunity for risk taking and to learn from their mistakes. A positive program climate has also been cited as an element in high quality programs that maintain excellent levels of youth engagement (Beckett, Hawken, & Jacknowitz, 2001; Bodilly & Beckett, 2005; Gottfredson, Cross, Wilson, Rorie & Connell, 2010; Mahoney, Eccles & Larson, 2004)

Participant Recruitment

Best Practice 3: **The program recruits a diverse mix of youth to participate.**

Though Lauver and Little (2005) advocate recruiting students from similar peer groups in an effort to raise attendance at after-school programs, there is evidence from 40 other references that programs should make an effort to recruit youth from diverse backgrounds into the program. This is because negative student behavior and attitudes can "infect" other participants, staff satisfaction and the program climate (Frazier, Capella & Atkins, 2007), which affects how the program operates and limits impact.

For instance, in their meta-analysis of after-school programs, Wright, John, Livingstone, Shepherd and Duku found that, "programs that isolate high-risk youth into homogeneous groups appear to reinforce antisocial behavior" (p. 45). Similarly, Cho, Hallfors and Sanchez (2005) conducted a randomized control trial of a program that was seemingly well designed to promote healthy youth development. At their six month follow-up, findings indicated higher incidents of drug use and negative outcomes in terms of anger management, depression and emotional distress amongst participants. They hypothesized that it was the clustering of at-risk youth in the program that accounted for these negative findings. This programmatic feature provides participants with, "a consistent opportunity to affiliate and bond with deviant peers" (p. 371). It also lead to the "subtle modeling of deviant behaviors and to complementary imitation, socialization and reinforcement" (p. 371) both within and outside of the after-school program environment. These findings were confirmed in a replication study conducted by Sanchez, Steckler, Nitirat,Hallfors, Cho & Brodish (2007). Similarly, they found that the attachment and exposure to high risk peers accounted for the iatrogenic program effects found in participating students. These findings are consistent with those reported by other studies included in this review, including Capaldi (2009); Dishion et al. (1999); Frazier, Cappella & Atkins, (2007); Valente et al., (2007) and Vandell et al., (2005). Eccles and Templeton's meta-analysis echoes these findings, and notes that "problematic behaviors on the part of peer participants in organized activity settings are linked over time to increases in involvement in such behaviors by many of the participants" (p. 127).

Based on this evidence, the literature clearly supports recruiting a diverse mix of youth (to participate in after-school programs. In fact, just as negative peer influences can infect a program and decrease outcomes for all youth involved, positive peer influences can have the reverse effect. Jones and Deutsch (2013) and Rorie, Gottfredson, Cross, Wilson, & Connell (2011) found that

positive student behavior and attitudes can also “rub off” on their peers and aid in creating a safe, healthy and positive program climate.

There is also some evidence (Berry & Lavelle, 2013; Gottfredson, Cross, Wilson, Rorie, & Connell, 2010) to suggest that students who self-select into the program experience better outcomes than those who join for other reasons. These authors underscored the importance of engaging content and youth-staff relationships in generating “buzz” about the program and engagement amongst participants.

Attrition and Barriers to Participation

Best Practice 4:
The program should address barriers to participation

A number of potential barriers to participation and retention also came out of the literature. These include for example concerns surrounding transportation home from the program (Vandell, Shernoff, Pierce, Bolt, Dadisman & Brown, 2005; Rapp-Paglicci, Ersing, & Rowe, 2006; Wright, John, Alaggia, & Steel, 2006) and competing activities (Vandell, Shernoff, Pierce, Bolt, Dadisman & Brown, 2005) It is important to understand these barriers as participation and low levels of attrition have been sighted as a significant predictor of positive outcomes in a number of studies, especially those related to Blueprints accredited programs (Allen & Philliber, 2001; Allen, Philliber & Hoggson, 1990; Little, Wimer, & Weiss, 2008; Sun, Sussman, Dent, & Rohrbach, 2008; Syn, Skara, Sun, Dent, & Sussman, 2006).

There is also a great deal of evidence in the literature suggesting that those who “drop-out” of after-school programs are those who were most at-risk and stood the most to benefit from participation (Allen & Philliber, 2001; Berry & Lavelle, 2013; Grolnick, Farkas, Sohmer, Michaels & Valsiner, 2007; Sun, Sussman, Dent, & Rohrbach, 2008; Syn, Skara, Sun, Dent, & Sussman, 2006; Weisman &Gottfredson, 2001). Berry and Lavelle (2013) also mention that at-risk youth are unlikely to sign up for such programs. One of the ways in which effective programs aim to reduce attrition and attract at-risk youth is by reducing the environmental barriers mentioned above (Bodilly & Beckett, 2005; Wright, John, Alaggia, & Steel, 2006). Other strategies include following other best practices mentioned in this report, including promoting and implementing engaging content, supportive staff relationships and a positive program climate.

Staff Hiring and Professional Development

Best Practice 5:
The program hires, trains and retains high quality staff.

With Granger noting that the after-school program workforce is “young, untrained and prone to frequent turnover” (p. 15), the importance of hiring, training and retaining high quality staff is a best practice that clearly emerged from the literature and cannot be understated. Bodilly and Beckett (2005); Capaldi, (2009); Everett, Chadwell, & McChesney, (2002); Fashola, (2003); Granger, (2010); Gineski, (2003); Hirsch, Mekinda & Stawicki, 2010; Kugler, 2001; Lauver & Little, 2005; Little, Wimer, & Weiss, (2008); Halpern, (2002) and Rhodes (2004) all found a link

between effective after-school programs and the quality (education level, experience and training) of staff. The findings from a study conducted by Gottfredson et al., (2010) "suggest that staff quality might be the single most important characteristic of program success because the quality of program staff seemed to affect other aspects of implementation" (p. 378). They also noted that, "staff members who were highly educated, well trained, and employed long-term appeared to observers to be more skilled in providing youth services" (p. 378). They also note that staff with these qualifications, "appeared better able to establish sound management, create a positive social climate and provide engaging content" (p. 378). It appears that quality staff both lead to a better structural functioning of the program, and are better prepared to develop meaningful positive relationships with youth (Deutsch, Wiggins, Henneberger & Lawrence, 2013; Halpern, 2002; Jones & Deutsch, 2013).

The ability for staff to develop meaningful relationships with youth is particularly important. In addition to the potential outcomes discussed above, Wagaman (2011) found that supportive youth-staff relationships have the ability to enhance empathy in participants. He argues that empathy is a key ingredient in both empowering youth and increasing their social skills. Wagaman (2011) indicated that these findings were especially strong for youth from at-risk or underprivileged backgrounds.

Further, while both note the difficulties in doing so, Fagan (2007) and Capaldi (2009) note that programs should strive to achieve a gender balance between staff and aim to hire those with bachelor degrees, as both were related to reducing negative outcomes.

Ensuring that staff are well-trained is also a vital component of effective after-school programs. Huang (2001) notes that, after-school programs can help youth deal with stressful situations if they are staffed with educators who are trained to understand youth development. (p. 52). Larson and Walker (2010) also argue for initial and ongoing training for staff in after-school programs because of the diverse nature of issues and dilemmas they face on a daily basis. They argue that the goal is "not to teach youth workers that there is one right solution for every dilemma, but rather to help them develop abilities to see the underlying complexity of situations and expand their repertoire of responses" (p. 348). Rapp-Paglicci, Ersing, & Rowe (2006) emphasize that even the most qualified and credentialed staff will have to undergo some sort of training when entering an after-school environment. They mention that classroom management, the program curriculum, group facilitation and working with at-risk youth are just some of the skills used that need to be learned for effective after-school program instruction.

Content and Pedagogy

There is little direction from the literature regarding the types of content, curriculum or activities that lead to positive outcomes in after-school programs. Though these aspects vary considerably across different after-school programs, developing and implementing a flexible curriculum full of engaging and meaningful content emerged as a best practice from the literature. After offering some evidence for this best practice, the remainder of this section will discuss outcomes related to the specific features in the UNITY Impact statement. As such, outcomes related to after-school programs that are arts-based, or focus on developing leadership, self-esteem, self-efficacy are also discussed below.

Flexible Curriculum and Engaging Content

Best Practice 6:
The program has a flexible curriculum and content that is engaging and meaningful to students

The literature suggests that successful after-school programs develop and implement a flexible curriculum that allows for teachable moments and youth-driven activities (Granger, 2008; Kugler, 2001; Larson & Walker, 2005; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 1998; Smeijsters, Kil, Kurstjens, Welten, & Willemars, 2011; Wright, John, Alaggia, & Steel, 2006). In reviewing different program sites for a Blueprints accredited program, Roth and Brooks-Gunn (1998) note that "flexibility characterized the organizational structure of successful programs" (p. 443). This is because they are able to adapt to the needs of the students and the school community, while not deviating from promoting high expectation and social norms.

There is also overwhelming evidence that successful after-school programs contain content that is engaging and meaningful for the population being served. Essentially, it is absolutely vital that after-school programs do not feel like "school after school", especially for those students who are deemed at-risk (Cornelli Sanderson & Richards, 2010; Gay & Corwin, 2008; Lauver & Little, 2005; Shernoff, 2010; Sun, Sussman, Dent, & Rohrbach, 2008; Sussman, Dent, Craig, Ritt-Olsen, & McCuller, 2002). For instance, if "students don't experience success during the school day, it is highly unlikely that they will be motivated to remain in school for another 2-3 hours unless they can be ensured that their negative experiences during the school day will not be replicated" (Fashola, 2003, p. 417). Similarly, Davies and Peltz (2013) point out that the effective after-school programs they investigated provided students with "opportunities for self-expression, sharing of feelings and thoughts, and time for unstructured play and fun" (p. 15). Pittman et al., (2004) sum up this best practice by stating that after-school programs should be trying to increase engagement in learning and school bonding, rather than directly trying to improve academic achievement. Berry and Lavelle (2013) found similar outcomes. They compared the socio-emotional outcomes between students who joined an after-school program because of personal interest and those who joined for other reasons. They found that, "motivation stemming from enjoyment and future goals were relatively strong predictors of positive developmental experiences (e.g., emotional regulation, initiative, teamwork, social skills)" (p. 79). Based on this evidence, it is clear that successful and effective after-school programs have a flexible curriculum packed with activities and content that are engaging and meaningful for the students who participate.

Arts-based Programs

Best Practice 7:
The program is rooted in educational theory and uses the arts as an avenue for improving other competencies.

Though the vast majority of evaluations and articles investigating the effectiveness of arts-based after-school programs are based mostly on qualitative methods or questionable quantitative methodologies, they still appear to harbor very promising and positive outcomes. Groves and

Huber (2003), Mazza (2012) and Milner (2000) all mention that arts programs can be particularly vital for students deemed at-risk. This is because they allow a venue for teaching and reinforcing life skills in a supportive and nurturing environment.

In one of the few rigorous quasi-experimental studies that utilized a control group, Chong and Kim (2010) found that while there was no change in academic achievement, the music-based program they evaluated was effective in "enhancing social skills and bringing about appropriate behavioral changes" (p. 193). They argue that it is the exposure to music, a medium that encourages cooperation and teamworkthat was responsible for these outcomes.

Rapp-Paglicci, et al. (2006) also conducted a rigorous study that collected data from 183 students who participated in the arts-based after-school program under investigation. Their data indicates that "students who were highly involved in the arts compared to non-involved peers did better on academic performance, dropped out of school less, and were less bored in school" (p. 54). One of their more interesting findings involves an accrued effect for students who stay involved in the arts long-term. Both this study and a replication study by Rapp-Paglicci, Stewart, & Rowe (2012) found that students who remain involved in arts programs will experience exponential gains in the areas mentioned above when compared to their peers who do not participate in these programs. These findings clearly show that long-term involvement in the arts can help students develop multiple competencies beyond simply gaining skill and experience in the genres being taught.

Wright, John, Alaggia, Duku, & Morton, (2008) reported similar outcomes to the high quality studies described above. Despite mentioning that their findings should be viewed with caution because their study lacked a control group, the authors support the notion that community or after-school arts programs can positively impact youth development. 111 youth took part in this mixed-methods study. The program took place over a nine month period. Participating youth, "showed an improvement over the nine-month period with respect to art and social skill development as well as a reduction in conduct and emotional problems" (p. 10). Parents of participating youth corroborated these findings through interviews. The authors also reported that participants had made gains in a number of other areas due to their involvement in the arts. These areas include gaining "improved interpersonal skills, positive peer interaction, increased independence, improved conflict resolution and problem solving skills, and skill acquisition in the arts activities" (p. 10). Though this study lacked a control group, these findings are consistent with those found elsewhere using similar methods and measures (Gay & Corwin, 2008; Milner, 2000; Smeijsters et al., 2011; Sullivan & Larson, 2010; Venable, 2005; Wright et al., 2006).

There is also a great deal of anecdotal evidence that examines the impact of programs that use popular urban art forms, like rap, hip-hop, spoken word and graffiti, as a method of engaging students and teaching pro-social skills (De Roeper & Salvesberg, 2009; McBride-Olson & Page, 2012; Travis Jr. & Deepak, 2011; Tyson, 2002). These programs use creating, enjoying and performing these art forms positively, rather than feed many of the negative connotations associated with these practices. In their small qualitative study, Olson-McBride and Page (2012) note that "rap and hip hop served as a starting point from which the group was able to move forward into interactions that allowed for therapeutic self-disclosure and connection" (p. 134). Gonzalez and Hayes (2009) also investigated the success of a program that uses self-expression, through rap and hip-hop. Their data indicates that this approach had striking impact on the levels of engage-

ment and self-disclosure from the at-risk youth that participated. In a recent Australian study De Roeper and Salvesberg (2009) reached similar conclusions. Their findings show that "the benefits of arts and cultural programmes can be far broader and more socially valuable than simply developing individual performance skills, and for the participants can have potentially long lasting psychological, social and ultimately economic benefits" (p. 223). The findings of all of these studies indicate that popular arts, which have typically been demonized and thought to promote unhealthy and anti-social behaviours, have the potential to benefit youth in a number of important developmental areas.

It is also worth mentioning that the use of these popular arts in the classroom and after-school programs provide more than just a tool to motivate and engage students. Lozenski and Smith (2012) indicate that curricular content and activities like rap, hip hop, spoken word and graffiti are actually grounded in critical pedagogy and liberatory educational theory. They mention that "critical pedagogy and culturally relevant pedagogy have been cited in hip-hop-based education as theoretical support for the reciprocal transmission of knowledge between teachers and students (p. 601). They also indicate that the core of such artistic genres are "transformative, informational, multi-layered, dynamic, generative, and often oppositional to oppressive structures" (p. 601. It appears that this content and these activities not only motivate students, but follow in the Frierian (Friere, 1985) tradition of using education as an avenue those who feel disenfranchised to express themselves and create positive social change. However, Edell (2013) found that students in the program she evaluated tended to reinforce and highlight some of the disparaging stereotypes that appear in some forms of rap music. It appears that there must be sufficient oversight and awareness from staff so that these activities can be empowering for all youth.

While the evaluation of programs that emphasize storytelling suffer from the same methodological issues discussed earlier, there is promising qualitative evidence that supports the practice in after-school programs, especially those that serve at-risk students. Alrutz (2013) argues that creating and performing one's personal story can disrupt and interfere with societal systems of power. "To tell your story for a public, to share your (perhaps marginalized, new, unpopular or uncomfortable) narratives has the potential to affect how each of us sees the past, participates in the present and imagines the future" (Alrutz, 2013, p. 44). Jocson (2006); Nelson, McClintock, Perez-Ferguson, Shawver and Thomspon (2010); Wales (2012); Weissman & Gottfredson (2001)and Wellik and Kazemek (2008) all reported similar qualitative findings.

All of these studies mentioned above offer positive support for arts-based after-school programs. However, Wright (2007) notes that "it is crucial for arts educators to define the artistic and social objectives of their activities" (p. 128). This is in order to make a link between the arts activities being carried out in the program and psychosocial outcomes. The theory of change could be that students will develop the intended skills if they participate in structured arts activities, combined with a caring environment and high quality, supportive staff.

Leadership Programs

Best Practice 8:
The program has a leadership development component.

Leadership components have been tied to successful after-school programs, however, we know very little about how these programs go about teaching leadership skills, the type of leadership opportunities offered to participants or any other specific program features (Cross et al., 2010). Jones and Deutsch's (2013) findings suggest that simply offering youth leadership development opportunities is a best practice found in effective after-school programs. They note that effective programs aim to build "responsibility and autonomy from youth but did so within the context of a supportive staff relationship…after-school program benefits may be maximized as youth find enjoyment in activities and take on leadership roles" (Jones & Deutsch, 2013, p. 37). Their positive findings are consistent with results reported elsewhere and discussed below.

Wales (2012) found that providing leadership opportunities for at-risk youth helped them develop connections within the community. Youth in this study also became more engaged in activities, both inside and outside of school. Similar findings have been expressed by multiple authors who have evaluated after-school programs based on developing empowerment, leadership skills and emotional regulation in secondary school populations (Burt, Patel and Lewis, 2012;Boyd, 2001;Denner, Meyer and Bean, 2005;Huang, 2001;Hindes, Thorne, Schwean, & McKeough, 2008;Libby, Rosen,& Sedonaen, 2005; Libby, Sedonaen, & Bliss, 2006; Martinek, & Schilling, 2003, Muno and Keenan, 2000; Yohalem et al., 2004). In their study, Mason and Chuang (2001) noted that students reported feeling more comfortable taking on leadership roles at home and school. Perhaps leadership program benefits extend beyond the classroom and can have a positive impact on students in their everyday lives.

Leadership skills are also tied to self-efficacy, self-esteem and anger management. For instance, Burt, Patel and Lewis (2012) found that leadership development can empower youth. As the self-image and self-perceptions of one's leadership ability increased, they found that their anger also declined significantly. This study is based on qualitative methods, but seems consistent with past findings. Both this study and Bandura's (2005) seminal work noted that it is essentially impossible for a program to simultaneously increase youth leadership skills and negative behaviors. In fact, he mentions that leadership skills development in youth provides a mental buffer against aggressive and anti-social behaviors while also increasing participants' self-efficacy.

Another interesting finding related to leadership is proposed by Wagaman (2011) and Gini, Albiero, Benelli, & Altoe (2007). Both studies found that secondary students with higher empathy scores were more likely to come to the defense of peers who are being bullied or victimized.

All of these findings indicate that a myriad of positive benefits can occur when youth are provided opportunities to develop leadership skills and take on leadership roles in a supportive environment.

Anger Management Programs

Best Practice 9: **The program has an anger management component.**

As mentioned above, Burt et al., (2012) used a pre- and post-test design to examine the relational competencies of students enrolled in a program designed to meet the developmental needs of at-

risk students. Based on their findings, they contend that it is not possible for students to develop leadership skills and see a subsequent rise in anger. Bandura (2005) made the same argument some years earlier.

In a quasi-experimental control trial investigating school-level anger management programming for secondary school-aged youth, DiBiase (2010) investigated whether the program had an impact on participant social skills, decision-making and anger outcomes. The program was comprised of 50 minute sessions that occurred three times a week for 10 weeks. 45 students participated in the study, with 22 in the control group and 23 receiving the intervention. The groups were comprised of classes of students where individuals were not randomly assigned to the treatment group, as is common when evaluating or investigating interventions at the school-level. The study also utilized a pre- and post-test design. Though the sample size was small, the findings are encouraging. DiBiase (2010) found statistically significant gains in social skills, moral judgement and serious decreases in anger (in the form of self-serving cognitive distortions, like blaming others, self-centeredness and assuming the worst in given situations) between the treatment and control groups. Though they also used a small sample, Van der Velden, Brugman, Boom, & Koops (2010) reported similar findings in terms of anger management in an earlier study investigating the same program. Based on the findings of both studies, programs that focus on anger management, "may serve to remediate cognitive distortions, reduce anger and prevent a decline in functioning level" (DiBiase, 2010, p. 52). However, these findings must be viewed with caution because of the very small sample sizes utilized by the respective authors.

It is also worth mentioning that Groves and Huber (2003), Rapp-Paglicci et al., (2006) and Smeijsters et al., (2011) found that students enrolled in arts programs have better anger management abilities than those who did not participate in the arts. Groves and Huber (2003) tried to determine if the creative process could be used an anger management tool for at-risk youth. They achieved positive outcomes because students were allowed tro try new experiences while developing trust, self-control and a sense of community.(Groves and Huber, 2003). Many of these studies lack appropriate sample sizes to generalize their findings or are based mostly on qualitative methods. However, the literature suggests that anger management programs have the ability to also increase social skills and the leadership abilities of participating youth.

Self-efficacy Programs

Best Practice 10:
The program has a self-efficacy component.

Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as one's belief in their capacities to both organize and implement the sources of action required to manage a variety of potential situations faced in daily life. As is the case with the other specific program features mentioned in this section, the literature offers some support for programs that emphasizethe development of self-efficacy in youth, but little direction for the ways in which they obtained positive outcomes.

Durlak et al. (2010) recently completed a meta-analytic study of after-school programs that aim to increase social skills in youth. On average, their findings indicate that participation in after-school programs led to positive impacts on participant attitudes regarding self-esteem, self-efficacy and other pro- and anti-social indicators.

A number of studies (Anderson, Sabatelli, & Trachtenberg, 2007; Berry & Lavelle, 2013; Frazier, Capella & Atkins, 2007; Huang, 2001; Wagaman, 2011; Wong, Lau & Lee, 2011; Yohalem et al., 2010) also suggest that high quality after-school programs encourage self-efficacy. Anderson, Sabatelli& Trachtenberg (2007) found that those with students with lower social skills showed a significant increase in self-efficacy and empathy. Berry and Lavelle (2013) suggest that intrinsically motivated students are more likely to experience significant gains in self-efficacy. Though many of these studies indicate that the research investigating these types of programs is still in its infancy, high quality after-school programs tend to to develop self-efficacy in participants.

Stress Management Programs

Best Practice 11:
The program includes stress management training.

Though the literature investigating stress management programs in after-school settings suffers from many of the same issues mentioned in the preceding sections, there is tentative support for their effectiveness with secondary school students. Kraag, Zeegers, Kok, Hosman & Abu-Saad (2006) conducted the only meta-analysis of such stress management after-school programs to date. They found that, "though several issues need to be resolved, primary prevention programs focusing on promoting mental health through school-based stress management training are most effective" (p. 468). This is despite the authors indicating that it was difficult for them to draw conclusions from the 19 studies included in their analysis because there was a wide variation in methods and outcome measures used across the studies. Many of the studies included in this analysis were 10 – 20 years old at the time of publication.

Though the literature in this area is limited, others (Boxer, Sloan-Power, Mercado & Shappell, 2012; Kerrigan, Johnson, Stewart, Magyari, Hutton, Ellen & Sibinga, 2011; Lohaus, 2012; Sibinga, Kerrigan, Stewart, Johnson, Magyari & Ellen, 2012) have found similar findings. In particular, programs that use a mindfulness approach to developing stress management skills are particularly successful (Kerrigan et al., 2011; Sibinga et al., 2012). Mindfulness is based on developing awareness and attention to one's feelings and using meditation, exercise or other stimuli as a way to cope with stressors.

Connections with Families, the School and Community

Best Practice 12:
The program establishies connections with the families of participants, the school and the community.

There is evidence in the literature to suggest that successful and effective after-school programs make meaningful connections with students' families, and develop partnerships with the school and within the community. Establishing and maintaining contact with the families of partici-

pants, even just a note informing them of the goals of the program, has been associated with decreased attrition (Weisman & Gottfredson, 2001), higher engagement amongst participants and increased program benefits (Capaldi, 2009; Wagaman, 2011).

Maintaining a connection to the school and community can be important for a number of reasons. Davies and Peltz (2012) note that gaining teacher and administrator support is vital for any after-school program to be successful in the short-term and sustainable in the long-term. Developing connections to the school and community can also increase buy-in to the program (Cosden, Morrison, Albanese & Macias, 2001; Lakin & Mahoney, 2006; Kugler, 2001; Nelson, McClintock, Perez-Ferguson, Shawver, & Thompson, 2008; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 1998). Cosden, Morrison, Albanese & Macias (2001) found that "after-school programs that do not take into account the values of the community and the culture may find success harder to achieve" (p. 212). Community connections can also provide opportunities for youth. Sullivan and Larson (2010) and Thompson (2012) found programs that connected students with community resources provided youth opportunities for further development. These connections allow youth to gain information and access to high resource adults and adult worlds.

It is also worth mentioning that a community volunteer component was found to be the main driver of change and positive outcomes in Wyman's Teen Outreach Program, one of the Blueprints accredited programs included in this review. This program, which lasts nine months in duration, emphasizes the development of socio-emotional and self-regulatory skills while providing an opportunity for youth to choose, plan and implement community service projects. Though the community service element of this program only requires a minimum 20 hours from participants, it provides an opportunity for youth to practice the skills taught in the program in a real world setting and build positive relationships with adults in the community. It has been suggested (Allen & Philliber, 2001; Allen, Kupermind, Philliber,& Herre, 1994; Allen, Philliber & Hoggson, 1990) that this opportunity for participants to network and demonstrate their learning is a key success factor related to Wyman's Teen Outreach Program. Multiple studies (Allen & Philliber, 2001; Allen et al.,1994; Allen et al., 1990) found an association between participants who logged the minimum number of volunteer hours and significant reductions in problem behaviors.

Program Evaluation

Best Practice 13:
The program practices frequent and ongoing evaluation.

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that the literature regarding after-school programming is both in its infancy, and has not reached the level of sophistication required to make no more than tentative conclusions about outcomes or best practices. For instance, there is only one meta-analysis investigating the emotional impact of these programs (Durlak, Weissberg & Pachan, 2010), and they found such serious methodological flaws in the studies investigated that they could not draw any conclusions. A number of authors have written about the state of the literature and rigor of evaluations in the after-school program field. DiBiase (2010) mentions that "more randomized experiments are needed to reach causal conclusions" (p. 290) and argues that more data is needed to determine what content, conditions, activities and levels of participation are needed to illicit positive outcomes. The use of "internal and external program evaluation can

serve as a quality control procedure and provide necessary feedback, and monitoring" (Zhang & Byrd, 2005, p. 8). In all, 22 of the articles reviewed for this study indicated that successful after-school programs The program practices frequent and ongoing evaluation. in an effort to track progress and effectiveness.

De Kanter (2001) argues that "program administrators should have evaluation tools in place to judge the effectiveness of different activities, to address accountability, and to recommend ways for improvement" (p. 19). This would seem a good start. However, there is essentially a consensus amongst all sources (Beckett, Hawken & Jacknowitz, 2001; Berry & Lavelle, 2013; Bodilly &Beckett, 2005; Hallfors, Cho, Sanchez & Khatapoush, 2006; Hanlon, Simon, O'Grady, Carswell & Callaman, 2009; Rapp-Paglicci, Ersing & Rowe, 2006;Wright, John, Alaggia, & Steel, 2006) that the evaluations of after-school programs need to be of higher quality. Fagan (2007) argues that the only way program administrators can establish public confidence in the effectiveness of their programming is through the use of rigorous evaluation based on experimental or quasi-experimental designs that includes pre- and post-testing. Similarly, Beckett, Hawken & Jacknowitz (2001) and Roth, Malone and Brooks-Gunn (2010) argue for similar designs that employ control groups.

In terms of indicators, Huang (2001) offers that after-school programs should evaluate both environmental factors, like the setting and staff, as well as those related to the academic and socio-emotional outcomes. Hirsch, Mekinda & Stawicki (2010) mention that evaluations of after-school programs should include multiple indicators of dosage that simply go beyond attendance and include engagement indicators, like participation.

The use of rigorous and frequent evaluation can both improve programming, and at the very least, ensure that programs are not harming those participants they intend to benefit.

Limitations of the Literature

As mentioned earlier, the nature and current state of the available literature and evaluation data on after-school programming leaves much to be desired. Like many of the reviews, meta-analyses and articles included in this review (Beckett, Bodilly & Jacknowitz, 2001; Bodilly & Beckett, 2005; Cosden, Morrison, Albanese & Macias, 2001; Durlak, Mahoney, Bohnert & Parente, 2010; Durlak, Weissman & Pachan, 2010; Fashola, 2003; Granger, 2008; 2010; Lakin & Mahoney, 2006; Lauer et al., 2006; Lauver & Little, 2005; Riggs & Greenberg, 2004; Shernoff, 2010), it was difficult to find rigorous, reliable and well-designed studies from which conclusions could be drawn. It appears that the literature on after-school programming is lacking in methodological rigor. Also, Zimmer, Hamilton, & Christina, (2010), mention that most evaluations of after-school programs tend to stop at determining the effectiveness and success of the whole program. As many programs (including the UNITY Club) are composed of many different elements that are meant to have a positive impact, very little is known about the specific program characteristics that lead to success.

For instance, Lakin and Mahoney (2006) could only conclude that the programs they reviewed were promising as their evaluation components lacked control groups. Rapp-Paglicci, Ersing & Rowe (2006) indicate that future studies need to use "random assignment, control groups, larger sample size, accurate data collection, use of standardized measures, and more rigorous study de-

signs" (p. 55). They also advocate for more longitudinal studies in the field in order to determine if program effects dissipate or accumulate following program completion. Later, Rapp-Paglicci et al., (2012) mentioned that most evaluations of after-school programs that incorporate the arts are unrefined and rely too heavily on solely qualitative methods. Similarly, Cross et al., (2010) note that very little can confidently be said about specific program content associated with success in an after-school environment. They found very little direction from the literature on specific types of content, activities or programming that lead to effective after-school programs. The only evidence they could find surrounds how the program is organized, and the types of students that should be recruited. In terms of programming, they, and most sources (Bodilly & Beckett, 2005; Fashola, 2003; Granger, 2008; Rapp-Paglicci, Ersing & Rowe, 2006; Scott-Little et al., 2002) could only mention that content should be engaging to participants and meet their individual needs.

Future directions

These glaring gaps in the current literature base offer many possibilities for future study of after-school programming. Beyond adhering to more rigorous evaluation methodologies discussed above (Beckett, Bodilly & Jacknowitx, 2001; Bodilly & Beckett, 2005; Cosden, Morrison, Albanese & Macias, 2001; Durlak, Mahoney, Bohnert & Parente, 2010; Durlak, Weissman & Pachan, 2010; Fashola, 2003; Granger, 2008; 2010; Lakin & Mahoney, 2006; Lauver & Little, 2005; Shernoff, 2010), there are other areas within the literature that need to be explored in order for there to be confidence in program effects and outcomes. Durlak, Mahoney, Bohnert & Parente (2010), Shernoff (2010) and Bodilly and Becekett (2005) mention that little data exists regarding how youth characteristics such as gender, age, and prior academic achievement of socio-emotional development relates to program outcomes. Similarly, Rapp-Paglicci, Ersing & Rowe (2006) indicate that future research should identify the following characteristics:

- What length, duration and intensity is necessary for the program to be effective?;
- What are the most effective programs for youth based on their age and any problematic behaviors they exhibit?; and
- Do youth from different cultures/communities respond better to different types of programming?

Of the reputable and rigorous studied that do exist, much of that literature is focused on whether after-school programs affect academic performance (Bodilly & Beckett, 2005; Laier et al., 2006; Scott-Little et al., 2002), rather than investigating the socio-emotional impacts that these programs can have on participants. Durlak, Weissberg and Pachan (2010) have conducted the only meta-analysis of studies that investigate the impact of after-school programs that seek to promote personal and social skills. They found that "participants demonstrated significant increases in their self-perception and bonding to school, positive social behaviors…and significant reductions in problem behaviors" (p. 294). They hypothesize that after-school programs that attempt to improve socio-emotional skills outcomes can benefit participating youth in a number of ways, including indirectly raising academic achievement. Based on these findings alone, it seems important for those evaluating after-school programs that promote similar features to determine if their programming is having a similar impact on the youth being served. Durlak, Weissberg and Pachan (2010) also echo the sentiments of the many researchers above by ending their article

with a call for further research to identify the specific program features and characteristics associated with positive outcomes.

4. Fidelity Checklist

The prior section identified a number of best practices relevant to UNITY Club. *Table 2*: **Fidelity Checklist** lists each of these best practices and a description of how they have been implemented by UNITY. Multiple lines of inquiry, including discussions with UNITY staff and the document review were used to determine program fidelity with the best practices identified in the literature review.

The best practices identified in the literature have been compared to UNITY's current programming and implementation. In cases where UNITY Club does not adhere to these best practices, suggestions and recommendations are offered for enacting and implementing these procedures without losing the core nature of the program.

Table 2: Fidelity Checklist

Best Practices from the Literature	Description UNITY Implementation / Recommendations for Implementation	Fidelity? (✓)
The program has a clear mission and is organized around achieving those goals.	• UNITY's mission statement appears in all documents reviewed for this study. All program materials are designed to achieve these goals. • The mission is introduced to students during the first program session and appears on all materials sent out to school, parents and the community.	✓
The program has a safe, positive and healthy climate	• Based on the UNITY Club lesson plans, the program is designed to foster a positive and inclusive climate. • According to the *Artist Training Manual,* facilitators are also trained to develop an atmosphere where students can create, share and perform their work without fear of any sort of bullying or victimization.	✓
The program recruits a diverse mix of youth to participate	• While UNITY makes a concerted effort to recruit at-risk youth and those with leadership skills to participate, a variety of students are invited to participate in the program.	✓
The program should address barriers to participation	• According to *UNITY's 2011/2012 Program Evaluation*, 200 students from eight different secondary schools participated in the program between September 2011 to June 2012. • Based on this information, it appears that UNITY is addressing barriers to participation as participant recruitment does not appear to be an issue.	✓
The program hires, trains and retains high quality staff	• UNITY offers staff six levels of scaffolded involvement based on their skills and experience. • Staff begin by volunteering with the program and gaining a sense of UNITY's mission and	✓

Best Practices from the Literature	Description UNITY Implementation / Recommendations for Implementation	Fidelity? (✓)
	vision. • Only after being involved in one-off assemblies, workshop and special events and UNITY tours will staff be offered an opportunity to facilitate the ASP • UNITY also only hires artists who are successful at their craft(s) and well-respected in the arts community. • Staff are also offered in-service training by registered social workers to ensure they have the skills to manage any	
The program has a flexible curriculum and content is engaging and meaningful to students	• The UNITY lesson plans indicate that facilitators have agency to modify the curriculum to meet the needs of participants. • Evaluation results indicate that students have a very positive impression of the program, which can be an indicator of engagement. • Perhaps it may be beneficial for future funding opportunities and optics for parents, teachers and school administrators if the UNITY curriculum and lesson plans were tied to the curriculum expectations of the provinces being served. For instance, UNITY Club touches on 100 different overall expectations within the Ontario curriculum. These expectations are displayed in *Appendix B*: Ontario Overall Curriculum Expectations. • Though not included due to space concerns, it is quite clear that UNITY Club's curriculum and lesson plans line up very well with the specific expectations within the curricular areas it touches on. • A lesson plan template that has space for the curricular expectations touched upon in each session is included in *Appendix C*: Lesson Plan Template.	✓
The program is rooted in educational theory and uses the arts as an avenue for improving other competencies.	• UNITY Club seems to be very much rooted in critical pedagogy. • All program documents emphasize how the program uses the arts as a gateway for improving the socio-emotional outcomes of particpating youth.	✓
The program has a leadership development component	• UNITY Club has a clear focus on developing participants' leadership skills and allowing them an opportunity to take on leadership roles. • This focus is emphasized inthe *UNITY Club ASP Logic Model,* as well as most program materials and documents reviewed for this study	✓

Best Practices from the Literature	Description UNITY Implementation / Recommendations for Implementation	Fidelity? (✓)
The program has an anger management component	• Anger management is mentioned as a key focus of UNITY Club in all program documents studied.	✓
The program has a self-efficacy component	• All program documents emphasize how the program is designed to support building self-efficacy in students.	✓
The program includes stress management training	• Stress management training is included in the skills taught to students through the urban arts.	✓
The program establishes connections with families of participants, the school and the community	• Information and permission forms are sent home to the participants' parents/guardians. • The UNITY *Artist Training Manual* stresses the importance of developing a solid rapport with staff and students at the school. • As UNITY Club's staff are successful artists, it is clear that very well connected within the larger arts community.	✓
The program parctices frequent and ongoing evaluation	• UNITY's *2011/2012 Program Evaluation* is definitely a good start. Similar internal research using quantitative and qualitative methods can serve as a useful tool for program improvement. • However, in order to prove that positive outcomes are the result of program effects, UNITY should attempt to conduct a quasi-experimental control trial that uses a comparison group from the same school who are not attending the program. A quasi-experimental evaluation is suggested as it can be very difficult to randomly assign individuals to treatment and control groups in a school setting. It would also be less time and resource intensive than a randomized control trial. • The lesson plan template in *Appendix C*: Lesson Plan Template could serve as a useful evaluation tool by acting as a facilitator log. This could monitor the success of each session, while also allowing facilitators to share their thoughts on effectiveness of various elements of the program.	

5. Path to Accreditation

Attaining accreditation from a national or international body would be beneficial to UNITY and the UNITY Club after-school program. Not only would such accreditation offer increased credibility for the program, but disseminating the program to other interested parties across North America could provide UNITY with another revenue stream. More importantly, this would allow the program to have a positive impact on a greater number of students in many jurisdictions.

As mentioned by Eccles and Templeton (2002), Blueprints provides a comprehensive database of published, peer reviewed studies of programs that have passed their rigorous accreditation processes. Programs that meet the strict standard for effectiveness laid out by Blueprints are accredited as either a "model" program or a "promising" program. Both the criteria for accreditation and a potential path UNITY Club could take to become accredited by Blueprints are discussed below.

Table 3: Blueprints Accreditation Criteria

Blueprints Accreditation Criteria
Promising Programs
Intervention specificity: The program description clearly identifies the outcome the program is designed to change, the specific risk and/or protective factors targeted to produce this change in outcome, the population for which it is intended, and how the components of the intervention work to produce this change.
Evaluation quality: The evaluation trials produce valid and reliable findings. This requires a minimum of (a) one high quality randomized control trial or (b) two high quality quasi-experimental evaluations.
Intervention impact: The preponderance of evidence from the high quality evaluations indicates significant positive change in intended outcomes that can be attributed to the program and there is no evidence of harmful effects.
Dissemination readiness: The program is currently available for dissemination and has the necessary organizational capability, manuals, training, technical assistance and other support required for implementation with fidelity in communities and public service systems.
Model Programs
Evaluation Quality: A minimum of (a) two high quality randomized control trials or (b) one high quality randomized control trial plus one high quality quasi-experimental evaluation.
Impact: Positive intervention impact is sustained for a minimum of 12 months after the program intervention ends.

UNITY Action Plan

It is estimated that it would take UNITY Club approximately three years to attain accreditation as a Blueprints promising program, and approximately five years to become a model program. An action plan to achieve these goals is listed below:

1. The outcomes the program is designed to change are clearly stated in the *UNITY Club ASP Logic Model* and other program documents. The mixture of program elements, in-

cluding the climate, diverse group of participants, staff, content and delivery are all designed to produce a change in outcomes. This is clear in UNITY's documentation and would more than likely not need any revision to receive accreditation from Blueprints.

2. As mentioned earlier, it can be quite difficult to conduct randomized control trials in a school setting. As such, in order to gain accreditation as a Blueprints promising program within the next three years, two quasi-experimental control trials should be conducted on UNITY Club in the 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 academic years.
3. These evaluations will have to display that the program both does no harm to participants and that there are positive outcomes in the areas UNITY Club is trying to change.
4. UNITY would also have to ensure that program materials are ready for dissemination. The lesson plan template in *Appendix C*: Lesson Plan Template is an example of how program materials can be standardized for a wider audience.
5. Technical support, in the form of a dedicated Director of Programming and Training would need to be appointed. This individual would be responsible for conducting training at new program sites and supporting them during the implementation, delivery and evaluation phases of the program.
6. Once the initial two quasi-experimental trials have been completed, UNITY should continue their evaluation activities and pursue accreditation as a model program. Though a randomized control trial would be difficult to implement and carry-out, it is possible and should be seen as a long-term evaluation goal.

As the evaluations Blueprints asks for can be rather expensive, it may be beneficial to explore funding opportunities that have a built in monitoring and evaluation component. This would allow UNITY to pursue this action plan without spending too much of the program budget on these activities. For instance, the Federal Ministry of Public Safety's *Youth Justice Fund* may be a viable funding stream to support ongoing process and outcomes evaluation for the UNITY Club program.

6. Conclusion

Unfortunately, the state of the current literature on after-school programs did not allow for the identification of specific content or activities associated with successful programs. However, *Table 4*: **Best Practices** lists the 13 different best practices that emerged from the literature.

Table 4: Best Practices

Best Practices
1. The program has a clear mission and is organized around achieving those goals.
2. The program has a safe, positive and healthy climate.
3. The program recruits a diverse mix of youth to participate.
4. The program should address barriers to participation.
5. The program hires, trains and retains high quality staff.
6. The program has a flexible curriculum and has content that is engaging and meaningful to students.
7. The program is rooted in educational theory and uses the arts as an avenue for improving other competencies.
8. The program has a leadership development component.
9. The program has an anger management component.
10. The program has a self-efficacy component.
11. The program uses stress management training.
12. The program establishes connections with families of participants, the school and the community.
13. The program practices frequent and ongoing evaluation.

As mentioned above, the literature provided very little direction in terms of specific activities and content associated with successful after-school programs. That said, UNITY Club seems to be on the right track. The analysis phase found that UNITY has implemented all but one of the 13 best practices. As UNITY Club is still in its infancy, it is not surprising that it has yet to implement a dedicated evaluation component. In terms of future directions, UNITY should continue to deliver the programming as planned, while also making attempts to supplement current internal "one-off" evaluation activities with high quality, external evaluations.

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Appendix A: Key Words and Search Terms

Key Words / Search Terms	Journals / Sources	Databases Searched
• After-school • Afterschool • After school program • After-school program • Afterschool program • Arts based program • Arts-based program • Arts based after-school program • Arts based after school program • Arts-based after-school program • Arts-based after-school program evaluation • After-school program best practices • Youth storytelling • Storytelling with youth • Storytelling program • School-based storytelling • After-school storytelling • After-school storytelling program • School-based storytelling program • Youth leadership development program • Youth leadership after school program • Youth leadership after-school program • Stress management program • Stress management after school program • Stress management after-school program • Youth self-efficacy • Youth self-efficacy program	• American Journal of Community Psychology • Journal of Community Psychology • Journal of Early Adolescence • Journal of Adolescence • New Directions for Youth Development • Canadian Journal of School Psychology • Journal of Adolescent Research • The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance • Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis • NASSP Bulletin • Criminology and Public Policy • Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology • The Arts in Psychotherapy • Educational Psychologist • Developmental Psychology • American Psychologist • Review of Research in Education • Youth Theatre Journal • Urban Education • Prevention Science • Critical Issues in Education • The School Community Journal • Teachers College Record • The School Community Journal • Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology • Social Policy Report • Journal of Applied Devel-	• ProQuest • ProQuest Education Journals • ProQuest Dissertations and Theses • JSTOR • EBSCOhost • Project Muse • Education Research Complete • Canadian Business and Current Affairs – Education • Microsoft Academic Search • Google Scholar • Thesis Canada Portal • Canadian Evaluation Society Grey Literature Database • American Evaluation Society • Federal and Provincial Government Websites / Project Reports • Websites of Policy Institutes and "think-tanks" • Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development website • Australian Psychological Society • U.S. Department of Justice – Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

• Youth self-efficacy after school program • Youth self-efficacy after-school program • School-based program • School based program	opmental Psychology • Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy • Applied Developmental Science • Equity and Excellence in Education • The Journal of Primary Prevention • Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk • Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review • Health Education Research • American Journal of Eval-uation • Reclaiming Children and Youth • Canadian Journal of Edu-cation • Reading Research Quarter-ly • Child and Adolescent So-cial Work Journal • Critical Social Work • International Journal of Cultural Policy • Economic of Education Review • Seminal Project Reports	

Appendix B: Ontario Overall Curriculum Expectations

Overall Curricular Expectations - Ontario
Grade 9 and 10 – The Arts (Dance)
A1. The Creative Process: use the creative process, the elements of dance, and a variety of sources to develop movement vocabulary;
A2. Choreography and Composition: combine the elements of dance in a variety of ways in composing individual and ensemble dance creations;
A3. Dance Techniques: demonstrate an understanding of the dance techniques and movement vocabularies of a variety of dance forms from around the world;
A4. Performance: apply dance presentation skills in a variety of contexts and performances
B1. The Critical Analysis Process: use the critical analysis process to reflect on and evaluate their own and others' dance works and activities;
B2. Dance and Society: demonstrate an understanding of how societies present and past use or have used dance, and of how creating and viewing dance can benefit individuals, groups, and communities;
B3. Connections Beyond the Classroom: demonstrate an understanding of the purpose and possibilities of continuing engagement in dance arts
C2. Contexts and Influences: demonstrate an understanding of the social, cultural, and historical origins and development of dance forms, including their influence on each other and on society;
C3. Responsible Practices: demonstrate an understanding of safe, ethical, and responsible personal and interpersonal practices in dance activities.
Grade 9 and 10 – The Arts (Drama)
A1. The Creative Process: use the creative process and a variety of sources and forms, both individually and collaboratively, to design and develop drama works;
A2. Elements and Conventions: use the elements and conventions of drama effectively in creating individual and ensemble drama works, including works based on a variety of sources;
A3. Presentation Techniques and Technologies: use a variety of presentation techniques and technological tools to enhance the impact of drama works and communicate for specific audiences and purposes
B1. The Critical Analysis Process: use the critical analysis process to reflect on and evaluate their own and others' drama works and activities;
B2. Drama and Society: demonstrate an understanding of how societies present and past use or have used drama, and of how creating and viewing drama can benefit individuals, groups, and communities;

B3. Connections Beyond the Classroom: identify knowledge and skills they have acquired through drama activities and ways in which they can apply this learning in personal, social, and career contexts.
C3. Responsible Practices: demonstrate an understanding of safe, ethical, and responsible personal and interpersonal practices in drama activities.
Grade 9 and 10 – The Arts (Integrated Arts)
A1. The Creative Process: apply the creative process to create integrated art works/productions, individually and/or collaboratively;
A2. Elements and Principles: apply key elements and principles from various arts disciplines when creating, modifying, and presenting art works, including integrated art works/productions;
A3. Tools, Techniques, and Technologies: use a variety of tools, techniques, and technologies to create integrated art works/productions that communicate specific messages and demonstrate creativity;
A4. Presentation and Promotion: present and promote art works, including integrated art works/ productions, for a variety of purposes, using appropriate technologies and conventions.
B1. The Critical Analysis Process: demonstrate an understanding of the critical analysis process by applying it to study works from various arts disciplines as well as integrated art works/productions;
B2. The Function of the Arts in Society: demonstrate an understanding of various functions of the arts in past and present societies;
B3. Values and Identity: demonstrate an understanding of how creating, presenting, and analysing art works has affected their understanding of personal, community, and cultural values and of Canadian identity;
B4. Connections Beyond the Classroom: describe the types of skills developed through creating, presenting, and analysing art works, including integrated art works/productions, and identify various opportunities to pursue artistic endeavours outside the classroom.
C3. Conventions and Responsible Practices: demonstrate an understanding of conventions and responsible practices associated with various arts disciplines, and apply these practices when creating, presenting, and experiencing art works
Grade 9 and 10 – The Arts (Music)
A1. The Creative Process: apply the stages of the creative process when performing notated and/or improvised music and composing and/or arranging music;
A2. The Elements of Music: apply elements of music when performing notated and improvised music and composing and/or arranging music;
A3. Techniques and Technologies: use a variety of techniques and technological tools when performing music and composing and/or arranging music.
B1. The Critical Analysis Process: use the critical analysis process when responding to, analys-

ing, reflecting on, and interpreting music;
B3. Skills and Personal Growth: demonstrate an understanding of how performing, creating, and critically analysing music has affected their skills and personal development;
B4. Connections Beyond the Classroom: identify and describe various opportunities for continued engagement in music.
C3. Conventions and Responsible Practices: demonstrate an understanding of responsible practices and performance conventions relating to music
Grade 9 and 10 – The Arts (Visual Arts)
A1. The Creative Process: apply the creative process to create a variety of art works, individually and/or collaboratively;
A2. The Elements and Principles of Design: apply elements and principles of design to create art works for the purpose of self-expression and to communicate ideas, information, and/or messages;
A3. Production and Presentation: produce art works, using a variety of media/materials and traditional and/or emerging technologies, tools, and techniques, and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of ways of presenting their works and the works of others.
B1. The Critical Analysis Process: demonstrate an understanding of the critical analysis process by examining, interpreting, evaluating, and reflecting on various art works;
B2. Art, Society, and Values: demonstrate an understanding of how art works reflect the society in which they were created, and of how they can affect personal values;
B3. Connections Beyond the Classroom: demonstrate an understanding of the types of knowledge and skills developed in visual arts, and identify various opportunities related to visual arts.
C2. Conventions and Techniques: demonstrate an understanding of conventions and techniques used in the creation of visual art works;
C3. Responsible Practices: demonstrate an understanding of responsible practices related to visual arts.
Grade 9 and 10 – Language Arts (Oral Communication)
1. Listening to Understand: listen in order to understand and respond appropriately in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes;
2. Speaking to Communicate: use speaking skills and strategies appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes;
3. Reflecting on Skills and Strategies:reflect on and identify their strengths as listeners and speakers, areas for improvement, and the strategies they found most helpful in oral communication situations.
Grade 9 and 10 – Language Arts (Writing)

1. Developing and Organizing Content: generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience;
2. Using Knowledge of Form and Style: draft and revise their writing, using a variety of literary, informational, and graphic forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience;
3. Applying Knowledge of Conventions: use editing, proofreading, and publishing skills and strategies, and knowledge of language conventions, to correct errors, refine expression, and pre-sent their work effectively;
4. Reflecting on Skills and Strategies: reflect on and identify their strengths as writers, areas for improvement, and the strategies they found most helpful at different stages in the writing process
Grade 9 and 10 – Health and Physical Education (Physical Activity)
1. Demonstrate personal competence in applying movement skillsand principles;
2. Demonstrate knowledge of guidelinesand strategies that can enhance their participation in recreation and sport activities.
Grade 9 and 10 – Guidance and Career Education (Interpersonal Knowledge and Skills)
1. Identify and describe the knowledge and skills necessary for successful interpersonal relations and teamwork;
2. Assess their interpersonal and teamwork skills and strategies, and explain how those skills requiring further development affect their learning;
3. Demonstrate the ability to apply appropriate interpersonal and teamwork skills in a variety of learning environments
Grade 11 and 12 – The Arts (Dance)
A1. The Creative Process: use the creative process, the elements of dance, and a variety of sources to develop movement vocabulary;
A2. Choreography and Composition: combine the elements of dance in a variety of ways in composing individual and ensemble dance creations;
A4. Performance: apply dance presentation skills in a variety of contexts and performances.
B1. The Critical Analysis Process: use the critical analysis process to reflect on and evaluate their own and others' dance works and activities;
B3. Connections Beyond the Classroom: demonstrate an understanding of the purpose and pos-sibilities of continuing engagement in dance arts.
C2. Contexts and Influences: demonstrate an understanding of the social, cultural, and historical origins and development of dance forms, including their influence on each other and on society;
C3. Responsible Practices: demonstrate an understanding of safe, ethical, and responsible per-sonal and interpersonal practices in dance activities
Grade 11 and 12 – The Arts (Drama)
A1. The Creative Process: use the creative process and a variety of sources and forms, both indi-vidually and collaboratively, to design and develop drama works;

A2. Elements and Conventions: use the elements and conventions of drama effectively in creat-ing individual and ensemble drama works, including works based on a variety of sources;
A3. Presentation Techniques and Technologies: use a variety of presentation techniques and technological tools to enhance the impact of drama works and communicate for specific audi-ences and purposes.
B1. The Critical Analysis Process: use the critical analysis process to reflect on and evaluate their own and others' drama works;
B2. Drama and Society: demonstrate an understanding of how societies present and past use or have used drama, and of how creating and viewing drama can benefit individuals, groups, and communities;
B3. Connections Beyond the Classroom: identify knowledge and skills they have acquired through drama activities, and demonstrate an understanding of ways in which they can apply this learning in personal, social, and career contexts.
C3. Responsible Practices: demonstrate an understanding of safe, ethical, and responsible per-sonal andinterpersonal practices in drama activities.
Grade 11 and 12 – The Arts (Exploring and Creating in the Arts)
A1. The Creative Process: apply the creative process to create integrated art works/productions, individually and/or collaboratively.
A2. Elements and Principles: apply elements and principles from various arts disciplines when creating,modifying, and presenting art works, including integrated art works/productions;
A3. Tools, Techniques, and Technologies: use a variety of tools, techniques, and technologies to create integrated art works/productions that communicate specific messages and demonstrate creativity;
A4. Presentation and Promotion: present and promote art works, including integrated art works/ productions, for a variety of purposes, using appropriate technologies and conventions.
B1. The Critical Analysis Process: demonstrate an understanding of the critical analysis process by applying it to study works from various arts disciplines as well as integrated art works/productions;
B3. The Arts and Personal Development: demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationship between the arts and personal development, including their own personal development;
B4. Connections Beyond the Classroom: demonstrate an understanding of and apply the types of skills developed through creating, presenting, and analysing art works, including integrated art works/ productions, and describe various opportunities to pursue artistic endeavours outside the class-room.
C3. Conventions and Responsible Practices: demonstrate an understanding of conventions and responsible practices associated with various arts disciplines, and apply these practices when creating, presenting, experiencing, and promoting art works.
Grade 11 and 12 – The Arts (Music)
A1. The Creative Process: apply the stages of the creative process when performing notated and/or improvised music and composing and/or arranging music;

A2. The Elements of Music: apply the elements of music when performing notated and impro-vised music and composing and/or arranging music;
A3. Techniques and Technologies: use a range of techniques and technological tools in a variety of applications relating to music.
B1. The Critical Analysis Process: use the critical analysis process when responding to, analys-ing, reflecting on, and interpreting music;
B2. Music and Society: demonstrate an understanding of social and cultural influences on and effects of traditional, commercial, and art music;
B3. Skills and Personal Growth: demonstrate an understanding of how performing, creating, and critically analysing music has affected their skills and personal development;
B4. Connections Beyond the Classroom: analyse opportunities and requirements for continued engagement in music.
C3. Conventions and Responsible Practices: demonstrate an understanding of conventions and responsible practices relating to music.
Grade 11 and 12 – The Arts (Visual Arts)
A1. The Creative Process: apply the creative process to create a variety of art works, individually and/or collaboratively;
A2. The Elements and Principles of Design: apply the elements and principles of design to create art works for the purpose of self-expression and to communicate ideas, information, and/or messag-es;
A3. Production and Presentation: produce art works, using a variety of media/materials and tradi-tional and emerging technologies, tools, and techniques, and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of ways of presenting their works and the works of others.
B1. The Critical Analysis Process: demonstrate an understanding of the critical analysis process by examining, interpreting, evaluating, and reflecting on various art works;
B2. Art, Society, and Values: demonstrate an understanding of how art works reflect the society in which they were created, and of how they can affect both social and personal values;
B3. Connections Beyond the Classroom: describe opportunities and requirements for continued engagement in visual arts.
C3. Responsible Practices: demonstrate an understanding of responsible practices related to visu-al arts.
Grade 11 and 12 – English (Oral Communication)
1. Listening to Understand: listen in order to understand and respond appropriately in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes;
2. Speaking to Communicate: use speaking skills and strategies appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes;

3. Reflecting on Skills and Strategies: reflect on and identify their strengths as listeners and speakers, areas for improvement, and the strategies they found most helpful in oral communication situations.
Grade 11 and 12 – English (Writing)
1. Developing and Organizing Content: generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience;
2. Using Knowledge of Form and Style: draft and revise their writing, using a variety of literary, informational, and graphic forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience;
3. Applying Knowledge of Conventions: use editing, proofreading, and publishing skills and strategies, and knowledge of language conventions, to correct errors, refine expression, and present their work effectively.
4. Reflecting on Skills and Strategies:reflect on and identify their strengths as writers, areas for improvement, and the strategies they found most helpful at different stages in the writing process.
Grade 11 and 12 – Health and Physical Education (Physical Activity)
1. Demonstrate personal competence in applying movement skills and principles;
2. Apply their knowledge of guidelinesand strategies that can enhance their participation in Recreational and sports activities.
1. Demonstrate interpersonal and teamwork skills required for success in their school, work, and community activities;
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the elements of group dynamics in a variety of settings;

Appendix C: Lesson Plan Template

UNITY Club Lesson Plan Template

1. Lesson Plan Information		
Session Number:	**Name:**	
Topic:	**Date:**	**Time:**

2. Curriculum Expectation(s)
Expectation(s) ***(Overall and specific expectations taken directly*** **from** ***The Ontario Curriculum):***   **Learning Skills** ***(taken directly*** **from** ***The Ontario Curriculum):***

3. Purpose and Content
The purpose of this session is?   **Today learners will:**

4. Evaluation Procedures
How will I know students have learned what the session intended?

5. Learning Context
A. The Learners   **(i) What prior experiences, knowledge and skills do the learners bring with them to this learning experience?**

(ii) Differentiated Instruction (Any accomodations, supports or changes in content or expectations for exceptional learners or specific participants based on their needs/interests.)
B. Learning Environment
C. Resources/Materials

6. Lesson Plan and Engagement Strategies
INTRODUCTION **How will I engage the learners*?* (e.g., motivational strategy, hook, activation of learners' prior knowledge, activities, technology)** **<u>Teaching</u>: *How does the lesson develop?*** **How are the concepts and activities being taught to students (e.g., scaffolding)** **<u>Reflection and Consolidation</u>*: How do I ensure that students have a solid understanding and grasp of the material?*** **<u>Application</u>: How do learners demonstrate their learning? (i.e., performance, sharing**

writing, etc.)

CONCLUSION: How will I conclude the session?

7. My Reflections on the Session

Describe what occurred during the session. What went well? Were there any challenges? Would you do anything differently if facilitating the same session in the future? What can I do to be more effective in supporting learning during the session?