

DOINGWHATWORKS

 SLIDESHOW

Full Details and Transcript



An Innovative Staffing Model in an Expanded Learning Time School

Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration (P.S. 636), New York
January 2011

Topic INCREASED LEARNING TIME

Practice STRUCTURE TIME

Highlights

- » Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration works with a local nonprofit organization to reduce the student-to-teacher ratio and provide additional academic support during the school's longer school day.
- » University Settlement staff coordinated the recruitment of community educators and provided professional development.
- » Community educators work side by side with classroom teachers during the school day and provide enrichment classes after regular school hours.

About the Site Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration
Brooklyn, NY

Demographics

- » 60% Black
- » 37% Hispanic
- » 2% White
- » 1% Asian
- » 98% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch
- » 7% English Language Learners

- » 13% Special Education

(The New York State School Report Card, 2008-09 and The Afterschool Corporation Newsletter, 2010)

New York City's P.S. 636, The Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, partners with parents, youth, and community-based organizations to offer integrative and innovative approaches to decision-making and support activities. To improve the school climate and institute a successful longer day, the school:

- » Has increased the length of the school day by 35%;
- » Provides more individualized and engaging instruction, enrichment activities, and sports;
- » Offers Saturday instruction to students needing extra support;
- » Conducts internal and external evaluations to track progress and plan for implementation improvement.

Full Transcript

Presentation Title: An Innovative Staffing Model in an Expanded Learning Time School

Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, Brooklyn, NY



Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration redesigned its school day after receiving a grant from The After-School Corporation. One of the hallmarks of the redesign model was reducing teacher-to-student ratio in all classrooms and in all parts of the day. Young instructors assist teachers in the classrooms and stay after regular school hours to provide additional instruction.



Slide 1: Finding staff

Text: In locating staff for after-school programs, it is essential to consider both the needs of the students and the requirements of the program's regulatory agency, in terms of number of staff and levels of experience. Programs can recruit from a variety of locations, including local community groups, colleges, and the schools themselves.

Ms. Tameeka Ford, after-school director at University Settlement, talks about meeting staffing needs.

Audio: We look for staff. We have 230-something kids enrolled in the school, which would require us to have 23 staff members as one-to-ten ratio as per our regulatory agency, which is Department of Health. And so the interesting thing is, while it's time to meet the needs of the school community as the after-school provider, we still have to meet the needs of our regulatory agency, which is Department of Health. So we have to follow their standards as well. In looking for staffing we reached out to high schools that the principal partnered with and had a good relationship with that principal, and so we were able to recruit some amazing young people from there. We reached out to colleges. We reached out to different organizations within the community to help bring a pool of strong youth workers to complement the university settlement model of becoming an integral part of the school community.



Slide 2: Schedule requirements

Text: One challenge in locating staff for after-school programs involves availability during not only the program's time with students, but training sessions, planning meetings, and other preparatory times.

Ms. Tameeka Ford, after-school director at University Settlement, talks about negotiating scheduling requirements with staff.

Audio: The staff are required to work between three and five hours a week. And so we have to find people with accommodating schedules and who will be able to attend trainings and do additional requirements: the school-run special events and family events, which will require people to commit to coming on Saturdays or staying after work. And so that was one of the hiring requirements that we were looking for in our youth workers.



Slide 3: Using assessments to determine student groups

Text: With low student-to-teacher ratios, instruction can take place in small-group sessions. Student assessments can be used to identify students with similar learning needs so that they can be more effectively placed in these small groups.

Robin Williams, assistant principal of Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, discusses classroom reorganization.

Audio: I am the data specialist, so I get to look at all of the children in the school, their data. And based on their data, we individualize instruction. What we do is we look at different test scores. We give simulated tests similar to what the state gives to the students, and also we create our own teacher-made tests, and we also have Acuity, which is a test that we take in New York City. And we gather all this data, and we look at the students, how well they are doing.



Slide 4: Differentiated instruction

Text: The small-group format, combined with the low student-to-teacher ratio, allows instruction to be learner-centered and inquiry-based.

Robin Williams, assistant principal of Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, discusses how instruction works during a literacy block.

Audio: Here, we have differentiated instruction, so during our literacy block we have a teacher that pushes in the classroom and we create a small ratio. So let's say, for example, Ms. C. Frazer will be with a group of five students and then another teacher will be with a group of five students. And then a group of students will be working on a specific task in Achieve 3000, which is individualized for them.



Slide 5: Creating an environment for engaged learning

Text: By focusing instruction on small, assessed student groups and providing enough staff to ensure a small teacher-to-student ratio, class sessions can become vibrant places of active, enthusiastic learning.

Robin Williams, assistant principal of Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, discusses the impact reorganization has had on classrooms.

Audio: When you walk in, you will see three people, or sometimes two: the teacher with two additional young people in the classroom. And you will see hands on. You will see movement in the classroom. You will hear great conversations going on. You will see very direct instruction because the ratio is decreased. You will see not more than ten or eight students in a group, with one young person or one adult in the classroom.



Slide 6: Social and emotional benefits

Text: Students also benefit socially and emotionally from having instructors in the building who are closer to them in age and who are accessible and available to them. The result is a sense of a caring school environment.

Robin Williams, assistant principal of Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, discusses having staff available who serve as a general “point person” for students.

Audio: Children have another point of contact in the building: someone who they can speak to, someone who they can go to about a specific issue, whether it's about homework, whether it's about academics, or whether it's something personal. A lot of times it's just really good to have more people that children could have as a point person.