



Realistic Objectives – Holy Grail?

Research Results and Skill Building Workshop

Part of

“The Afterschool Experience: A Different Kind of
Revolution”

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*Realistic Objectives – Holy Grail?
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Realistic Objectives – Holy Grail? Outline



Outline

- I. Introduction – Goals and objectives for this session
- II. Research – Some results from current research projects from around the United States
- III. Implications for Improving Programs and Evaluations
- IV. Objectives – Elements, examples, and questions
- V. Operationalization and Indicators
- VI. Pairing and Sharing
- VII. Q & A



Realistic Objectives – Holy Grail? Research

II. Research Results

Study 1: “The Impact of After-School Programs: Interpreting the Results of Four Recent Evaluations” (Kane 2004)

Available at: http://www.wtgrantfoundation.org/usr_doc/After-school_paper.pdf

- Analysis of 129 centers in cities across the United States
- Overall, mixed results found



Realistic Objectives – Holy Grail? Research, cont.

II. Research Results, cont.

Kane 2004 (continued)

- Four major findings about programs:
 - Attendance was sporadic in drop-in centers
 - Mixed impact on the proportion of children without supervision after school
 - No significant impact on academic achievement
 - Programs promoted parental involvement, student engagement, and commitment to homework



Realistic Objectives – Holy Grail? Research

II. Research Results, cont.

Study 2: Engaging Adolescents in Out-of-School Time Programs:
Learning What Works (Little and Lauver 2005)

Available at: <http://www.tpronline.org/>

- Analysis of 60 recent evaluations in the Harvard Family Research Database
- Overall, recruitment and participation are still important issues.



Realistic Objectives – Holy Grail? Research, cont.

II. Research Results, cont.

Little and Lauver 2005 (continued)

- Four major findings affecting recruitment and retention:
 - Age of youth involved
 - The choice of programs available
 - The goals for the program schedule and the target population
 - The specific activities offered



*Realistic Objectives – Holy Grail?
Implications for Programs and Evaluations*

III. Implications for Programs and Evaluations

Implications for Programs

- Know your participants
- Emphasize participant needs
- Explain benefits of participation
- Reach out to youth and families
- Improve data collection
- Verify true level of demand for your program



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Implications for Programs and Evaluations, cont.*

III. Implications for Programs and Evaluations

Implications for Evaluation

- Maintain reasonable expectations
- Emphasis on “intermediate outcomes”
- Investigate intervening effects
- Assess local needs and barriers to participation
- Investigate after-school care arrangements



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Operationalization and Indicators*



V. Operationalization and Indicators

Operationalization

- The process of converting objectives into specific, observable behaviors
- Lends concreteness to abstract concepts



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Operationalization and Indicators, cont.*

V. Operationalization and Indicators

Indicators

- Provide us with concrete information
- Obtaining indicators is not always an easy process
- Summarizing indicators may be painless or quite involved
- Deeper levels of analysis are possible



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