

The Afterschool Curriculum Choice Database is an initiative of PEAR, the Program in Education, Afterschool and Resiliency at Harvard University. In the book **Afterschool Education** (Noam, Biancarosa and Dechausay 2002) curricula was classified on a scale from highly structured to informal, and this model serves as a grid for the many curricula available to afterschool programs. In such a fast-moving field, it is important to stay current, so the database to be presented here will be an ongoing project, updated as new curricula become available. The foundation for this work will be laid with the unveiling of the database in 2006 and will grow over time to include feedback from curriculum users.

This project is led by Dr. Gil Noam of Harvard Medical School and McLean Hospital, Director of PEAR, with an advisory board that includes Professor Maryann Wolf of Tufts University, Gina Biancarosa of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Dishon Mills of the Boston Public Schools, and Jan Mokros of TERC.

Purpose

The data base is intended for use by after-school professionals looking for developed curricula. We hope to make it easier for afterschool providers to find appropriate and challenging lesson plans and organized activities to enrich their programs.

Use

The database will be searchable on a number of criteria, including duration, age-level, cost, staffing needs, and evaluation results. Users will perform searches to generate lists of curricula on which extensive information is available, allowing them to make informed programming choices.

Benefit

Programs can match their financial capacity, their staff training and desired student outcomes to existing curricula. The ability to find, in a central location, information on instruction modules that are fun as well as standards-based, will make programming decisions easier for afterschool coordinators.

There is a benefit to students, who will have engaging and enriching learning experiences. There is a benefit to staff, who will have a proven curricula on which to base their activities. There is a benefit to the field, which will come closer to the emerging consensus that some afterschool time be used for activities tied to academic outcomes.

Selection

The main criteria were length of instruction unit, applicability to and proven use in afterschool programs. Program information was gathered by nominations from the field, inventory of curricula presently used in afterschool programs, internet searches, and literature reviews.

Nominations

We are interested in published and professionally developed curricula as well as activities developed by individual afterschool programs.