



Out-of-School Interventions



Out-of-School interventions are activities that involve students in after-school clubs, activities and tutoring. Research shows that fostering participation in afterschool activities leads to increased achievement, attendance, pro-social behavior, and connection to school (Department of Education, 2002).

Coaching an afterschool sport

“I began coaching freshmen girl's basketball this month, and the experience so far has been fantastic. Engaging students outside of the classroom in a way that I very much enjoy makes my experience that much better, and it's incredibly rewarding to recognize the changes in my students that I coach both in the classroom and on the court. Students that I have had a hard time connecting with in the classroom and during the school day have blossomed during basketball practice where they're allowed to push and shove me and goof around in a non-threatening environment. Coaching has also allowed me to watch some of my quiet students turn into vocal and exuberant, if sometimes misdirected, leaders. All in all, it has been an experience unlike any other.”

Introducing students to new activities

“On the homepage of the Fighting Chance Boxing Club's website is a quote from Muhammad Ali that reads, ‘Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth.’ One of my ninth grade students is perfectly unique. She has more brilliant ideas in her fifteen-year-old brain than most people my age. She has a passion for art and photography and online gaming and last but not least, UFC fighting. After overhearing a conversation she had with our social worker, about her love of UFC, I asked her if she had any interest in joining me at Fighting Chance one day after school. Fighting Chance is an abandoned firehouse converted into a gym filled with boxing and exercise equipment where youth from the North Minneapolis community can come each day after school for free to learn boxing techniques, engage in physical activity, and eat a meal with their peers and the trainers. When she and I watched a video about the gym and what it offers, her first response was, ‘Can we go today?!’

That next Wednesday, the big day had arrived. She ran into my office first thing in the morning, giddy with excitement for what the afternoon might hold. At 3:30, we hopped on the cramped bus and began our adventure towards Fighting Chance. When we arrived, she quickly retreated into her shell, nervous for this new experience outside of her comfort zone. The trainers immediately welcomed her into the club, getting her wrists wrapped and assisting in putting on her brand-new, shiny boxing gloves. With a bit of hesitation, she climbed the steps into the ring. For the next hour, she poured her heart and soul into her punches. Even when her asthma started to kick in, she continued to push herself in the intense cardio and ab workouts led by the trainer. The group ended their session with high-fives all around and she ran over to us, beaming with pride in what she had just accomplished. Since that day, she has returned to Fighting Chance nearly every day after school, even bringing her little brother sometimes.”

Encouraging students to participate in afterschool activities

“One of my students is the captain of the basketball team. Basketball is one of the big things that keeps him in school -- his attendance dramatically improved when the season started. I've made an effort to be at every game I can, and it's been so rewarding to see him grow as a leader both on and off the court. A couple days ago some of the other guys on the team were standing around in the hallway. I approached them with the ultimate goal of convincing them to go to class -- not always a well-received effort. I introduced myself and they all responded with, 'Yeah, we know, you're at all the games!' Now one of them and I are working on a physics project that incorporates basketball, and it's rewarding to know that my presence at the games was noticed by the students, and appreciated, and now I have much deeper relationships my students.”

Using an afterschool activity to increase academic engagement

“I was thrilled when I found out that my host site would be having its first ever track and field team this spring. I hurriedly wrote to the athletic director and asked if I could help coach the team and he said I would be a welcome addition. I have competed in track and field for a number of years and was excited to get started as a coach! Of course, my own enthusiasm for the sport was not what mattered most; my main goal was to help generate excitement among some of my focus list youth about running. I think sports can offer a lot to students, particularly those who may be struggling with attendance and grades. If a student has an activity they look forward to at the end of each day, they might be compelled to come to school and work their way through the more difficult, unpleasant parts so that they can participate in what excites them most.

I think that one of the students on my caseload benefited quite a lot from being on the track team. She is a talented runner, but when she first started it seemed like confidence was an issue. She would often fail to finish runs around the block, stopping to walk back about half-way through. We worked patiently to help her run with more self-assuredness and she gradually improved. When it came to our first competition, she ran great. I was impressed not only by her speed but by her positive attitude. The student's family and friends also showed up to cheer her on. It was awesome to see her step up and run well!

In the end, I think track and field was the type of positive intervention that I described above. It really did give this student something to feel excited about at school. Running certainly does not fix a lot of the underlying issues a student may face at school. But it can help a student improve their attendance and actually be in the building.”

