

# UTILIZATION-FOCUSED EVALUATION OF A STEM ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact and utilization of a STEM enrichment program (hereafter referred to as The Program). The Program consisted of two parts. First an educator resource center provided free educational materials throughout The Program's home state. The second part of The Program was a network of education specialists who provided professional development for teachers and modeled lessons in classrooms with students.

The problem addressed by this study was a lack of knowledge regarding the impact of The Program on key stakeholders. The Program's director requested a utilization-focused Program evaluation to answer thirteen questions. His questions covered Program impact for five areas: overall impact on teachers, overall impact on students, overall impact of materials, overall impact of Program personnel, and overall impact on STEM education.

A mixed-methods case study was designed to gather data. Quantitative data included Program archival data regarding the number of contacts for various groups of stakeholders and a survey distributed to teachers who had used The Program's services on at least one occasion. Qualitative data included written comments gathered from the teacher surveys, seven teacher focus groups, and four Program personnel interviews.

Data found an overall positive Program impact in all areas. Both quantitative and qualitative data showed favorable perceptions by teachers and Program personnel. It is now known if data from this case study can be generalized to other STEM enrichment programs. Future research might include if The Program's model could be used to generate new STEM enrichment programs.