



## Expanding **minds** and Opportunities

Leveraging

# the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success

This article is an excerpt from the groundbreaking book, ***Expanding Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success***. This landmark compendium, edited by Terry K. Peterson, PhD, is composed of nearly 70 research studies, reports, essays, and commentaries by more than 100 researchers, educators, community leaders, policy makers, and practitioners.

Collectively, these writings boldly state that there is now a solid base of research and best practices clearly showing that quality afterschool and summer learning programs—including 21st Century Community Learning Centers—make a positive difference for students, families, schools, and communities.

Together, the collection of articles demonstrates the power of quality expanded learning opportunities to:

- **promote student success and college and career readiness;**
- **build youth assets such as character, resilience, and wellness;**
- **foster partnerships that maximize resources and build community ties; and**
- **engage families in their children's learning in meaningful ways.**

For information on how to order the full book, download sections and individual articles, or explore the topic areas, visit [www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds](http://www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds).

### About the Expanded Learning and Afterschool Project

The Expanded Learning and Afterschool Project is a 50-state initiative harnessing the power of networks and leaders to help schools and communities leverage the time beyond school to accelerate student achievement. A partnership of funders led by the C.S. Mott Foundation support the Expanded Learning and Afterschool Project. More information about the book and the project, as well as additional resources, can be found at [www.expandinglearning.org](http://www.expandinglearning.org).

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## Learning for a Complex World: Expanding Global Learning in Afterschool and Summers

Leaders in the afterschool and summer learning fields are increasingly in agreement on a single, fundamental belief: High quality afterschool and summer programs should focus on providing what young people need to be successful in school and in life. Exemplary programs seek to fill the gaps between school, community, and home in ways that not only keep kids on track, but also help them get ahead and become contributing members of society. Furthermore, the type of learning provided by high quality afterschool and summer learning programs is designed to be hands-on, experiential learning that engages youth in personally meaningful topics and pursuits while simultaneously reinforcing core knowledge and skills. This article will describe how high quality, cutting-edge programs can incorporate all of these core principles and strategies and, in addition, do it within a *global learning framework*, thereby providing enhanced relevance and meaning for youth in our rapidly changing world.

When considering what young people need to be successful in both college and career, those in the business community (Committee for Economic Development, 2006; New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 2008) and the higher education community (Reimers, 2006; Reimers, 2009) alike emphasize that knowledge of the wider world, the skills to innovate and navigate in multiple contexts, and the dispositions to make a positive impact are critical. The complex mix of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that makes up *global competence* is no longer only required for specific university majors or certain careers—and it can no longer be for elite students only. Global competence is critical for all students, from all backgrounds, to be able to collaborate and compete effectively in the global 21st century (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Building global competence is an especially powerful tool for broadening students' skill sets, interests, and capacity for learning, especially in underserved and marginalized communities.

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By using the world as a context for learning, afterschool and summer programs can help youth explore meaningful and relevant content while developing the academic skills and other competencies they need to succeed as citizens of the 21st century. The process by which young people develop global competence needs to become an essential approach for all education programs, both in school and out of school. Global learning provides the opportunity for experiential, interdisciplinary learning that deeply engages youth and that more tightly links schools, communities, and families around a focus on global issues and topics that have local and personal connections.

### Defining Global Competence

The Council of Chief State School Officers recently partnered with the Asia Society to convene a national task force that defined global competence as *the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance*. Globally competent students are able to:

- 1. Investigate the world** beyond their immediate environment, framing significant problems and conducting well-crafted and age-appropriate research.
- 2. Recognize perspectives**, others' and their own, articulating and explaining such perspectives thoughtfully and respectfully.
- 3. Communicate ideas** effectively with diverse audiences, bridging geographic, linguistic, ideological, and cultural barriers.
- 4. Take action** to improve conditions, viewing themselves as players in the world and participating reflectively (Boix Mansilla & Jackson, 2011).

In the push to focus on standardized tests, however, these four domains of global competence are often addressed as an afterthought, or they are seen as the natural byproduct of a good education. In fact, the types of knowledge and skills required to achieve global competence can be *foundational* to—not simply a result of—disciplinary and interdisciplinary inquiry. In this article, we demonstrate how schools and afterschool programs can integrate global learning as the foundation for a comprehensive approach to crafting curriculum, facilitating instruction, and embedding authentic assessment.

### Promising Practices in Global Learning

The four domains of global competence described above provide a ready lens for embedding globally significant content and contexts into afterschool programming. The key is to consider how the global context adds meaning to the knowledge and skills reflected by state standards for student achievement or other learning goals. Rather than treat global competence as an “add-on,” afterschool and in-school educators can use the four domains described above as a framework for student engagement and learning.

In terms of curriculum, global competence has clear implications for the content and topics that educators and students in school and in expanded learning programs choose to explore in the course of teaching and learning. In *Educating for Global Competence*, Boix Mansilla and Jackson (2011) write that globally significant topics generate deep engagement, demonstrate clear local-global connections and visible global significance, and invite genuine disciplinary or interdisciplinary exploration:

*Topics can be deemed significant on multiple grounds: breadth, uniqueness, immediacy, consequence, urgency, ethical implications. Some topics matter because they affect a large number of people on the planet (e.g., climate change). Others may be significant because they demand urgent global solutions (e.g., girls' rights to education, global health and security) or because they directly affect students' lives (e.g., migration in local neighborhoods). Clarity about why a topic matters underlies all quality instruction (p. 56).*

Classroom teachers and community educators in afterschool and summer programs must consider how best to guide student learning on globally significant topics. As described above, the four domains of global competence expect learners to investigate the world, recognize perspectives, communicate ideas, and take action. This framework is designed to promote engaged and active inquiry and can serve as a guide for structuring instruction that promotes global learning. When applied to significant content and topics, the framework offers a powerful tool for guiding student learning both within and across disciplines.

Clearly, the type of learning that global competence requires cannot be assessed via a simple multiple choice test. Educators can assess student progress and achievement by creating learning opportunities that require students not only to acquire knowledge and skills but also to apply them to complex problems in novel situations. A variety of performance-based assessments, such as presentations, performances, exhibitions, and action projects, provide critical information to the staff about where students are on their journey towards global competence. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, more authentic assessments with real-world audiences motivate repeated practice and drive student engagement towards mastery.

### **Global Learning in Out-of-School Time**

When afterschool programs use global learning as the foundation for curriculum, instruction, and assessment, they are able to connect with school subjects across the disciplines while continuing to ground learning in the core principles of youth development. One outstanding example of how afterschool programs can infuse

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youth leadership and development principles within a global education and civic engagement curriculum is provided by Global Kids. Global Kids offers a number of globally oriented education programs to youth during the school day, after school, and during the summer at school sites across New York City and Washington, DC, as well as online.

Four key strategies undergird all Global Kids programs: global education, civic engagement, leadership development, and college/career readiness. The curriculum is designed as a series of 1.5- to 2-hour workshops, each focused on a global issue. The workshops incorporate active learning in the form of small-group work, games, role-playing, and the use of media and technology to bring issues to life. The goal is to engage youth participants in interactive activities and ensure they are actively sharing knowledge and discussing and debating the issues at hand. In planning the curriculum, staff members first identify a set of core learning outcomes and competencies, which include content, skills, and experiences. Then taking into account youth input on what they want to learn, Global Kids staff map out a series of themes for the year and assign each theme to a staff member to develop, according to his/her expertise and interest.

Although workshops are the core components of the organization's approach, Global Kids also incorporates field trips, guest speakers, and other elements to help youth engage with critical issues. Youth across all programs are required to take action by developing and implementing substantive peer-education projects—including workshops, movie screenings and discussions, mini-conferences, and educational theater pieces—as well as social action and service projects. A recent youth-driven Global Kids campaign involved local, national, and international engagement on climate change, including the participation of five students at the United Nations Rio +20 Earth Summit in Brazil in June 2012.

Afterschool programs in more rural communities can also take a global approach to connecting youth development with academic achievement. At the Newfound Regional High School in Bristol, New Hampshire, a federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers program has become an afterschool International Club that offers students expanded learning opportunities (ELOs) to earn high school credit. The afterschool director works with the teachers to build their capacity to develop student-driven performance assessment tasks connecting global competencies with course competencies. The student-driven International Club decided to lead an international project monthly for the entire school. The students design the project, identifying the competencies they are targeting and the means by which these competencies will be assessed.

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In Milledgeville, Georgia, the High Achievers Program has incorporated a global learning focus by creating a structure for programming, staffing, and partnerships that would support the development of global competences in youth from age 6 to 18. During this year-round expanded learning program, youth in grades 9–12 learn about different countries and cultures that are linked to current events and that have connections to the United States. These youth participate in the Peace Corps World Wise Schools curriculum and Skype with Peace Corps volunteers living abroad. Students compare what they are learning about global issues with issues that affect them in their community. These youth are then hired to serve as camp counselors for younger students, ages 6–12, who attend global-themed camps held over spring break and during the summer. During the Global Spring Break Camp, high school youth help their younger peers explore a different country each day, while during the Global Summer Camps, students explore a different country each week. The High Achievers Program relies on strong community partnerships for its success. The program works closely with the Georgia College and State University at Milledgeville. College interns gain required experiential learning hours by working with the high school students throughout the year to identify global topics, issues, and examples that the students then research and convert into activities for the spring break and summer camps for younger children. International faculty and students from the college visit the program throughout the year to talk about their native cultures as well.

### **For More Information**

The following websites provide additional resources on global competence and global learning in afterschool programs:

- Expanding Horizons: Developing Global Learning in Out-of-School Time  
[www.asiasociety.org/expandedlearning](http://www.asiasociety.org/expandedlearning)
- CCSSO EdSteps Project: Global Competence  
<http://edsteps.org/>
- Educating for Global Competence: Preparing Our Youth to Engage the World  
<http://asiasociety.org/files/book-globalcompetence.pdf>
- Global Kids  
[www.globalkids.org](http://www.globalkids.org)

## Recommendations for Getting Started

The Asia Society provides technical assistance to afterschool and summer programs across the nation, including many statewide afterschool networks, that are seeking to incorporate a focus on global education. Drawing on its capacity-building work, the Asia Society offers the following recommendations to help afterschool and summer programs consider how best to integrate a global learning approach to help youth become globally competent:

- 1. Form partnerships** with local businesses, nonprofits, and universities, many of which have global connections and resources to help you get started—and can help you spread the word and build local interest and support.
- 2. Create clear learning goals** that combine disciplinary knowledge and skills embedded in state or local student achievement standards with the four domains of global competence: Investigate the World, Recognize Perspectives, Communicate Ideas, and Take Action. See the CCSSO EdSteps website for a matrix of global learning outcomes: [http://edsteps.org/CCSSO/DownloadPopUp.aspx?url=SampleWorks/Matrix\\_Print\\_Apr8.pdf](http://edsteps.org/CCSSO/DownloadPopUp.aspx?url=SampleWorks/Matrix_Print_Apr8.pdf)
- 3. Design curriculum around globally significant topics** that have local and personal connections within your community and student populations. Consider long-term projects as well as the shorter 1–2 hour workshop format that Global Kids employs.
- 4. Foster active and engaged inquiry** by using the four domains of global competence defined by the Asia Society and the CCSSO taskforce to structure student learning.
- 5. Embed authentic assessments** that enable to students to apply and demonstrate their learning through performances for real-world audiences.

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### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Alexis Menten** directs Asia Society's Expanding Horizons initiative, which provides technical assistance and professional development to national, state, and local expanded learning programs and afterschool intermediaries. She also leads the Society's Proficiency-Based Pathways work, which is implementing a performance-based assessment system for global competence in four high schools in Colorado, Texas, and New Hampshire. Menten joined Asia Society in 2005 after several years in Central Asia and the Middle East.

**Evie Hantzopoulos** became executive director of Global Kids in 2010, after serving as its director of programs/deputy director since 1996. Over the years, she has helped oversee the development, supervision, and expansion of GK's global education, youth leadership, and social action programs in New York City and Washington, DC, public schools. She also spearheaded the writing of Teen Action, a service-learning curriculum grounded in GK methodology for the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development. Hantzopoulos is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

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