



Afterschool Programs: Inspiring Students with a Connected Learning Approach

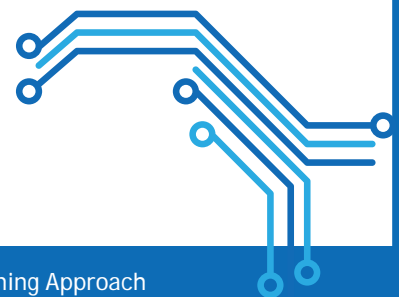
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INTRODUCTION

In his book “Kids First,” David L. Kirp wrote, “Children aren’t autonomous...They grow up in ‘systems.’ The intimate world of the family, and, later, the classroom, is linked to the surrounding community, which is in turn embedded in the larger society.”¹ Indeed, research has found that young people learn critical skills necessary to become conscientious citizens in a variety of settings—at home, in the classroom, among their friends and in their community. An educational approach that exemplifies this understanding of the way children learn and grow is connected learning. Afterschool programs have been among the pioneers in creating a connected learning environment for students that builds on their interests; introduces them to new passions; provides mentors and a supportive peer network; and links this engagement to academics, career and civic participation.

Afterschool programs are flexible, allowing students to further explore their interests; they are social, bringing together students and their friends, as well as peers who share their curiosities; and they are academically enriching, finding new ways for students to take part in relevant, hands-on activities while building academic and workplace skills and knowledge. However, through new research, innovations in technology and continuous advancements in the field, afterschool programs have the opportunity to more fully embrace and purposely implement a connected learning approach.

At a time when U.S. students’ academic performance has seemed to stall, based on the latest Program of International Student Assessment scores,² steps need to be taken to help youth achieve success in school, in work and in life. Yet, the majority of youth are disengaged from the learning that takes place in and out of school. As the opportunities to learn and gain new knowledge and skills after school hours continue to grow—including the new learning opportunities that are fostered by today’s ever-evolving technology—disconnected young people are at risk of falling even further behind. Connected learning addresses the lack of engagement in learning by drawing on young people’s interests and peer networks and connecting to lessons both inside and outside of school. This approach recognizes that there are abundant learning opportunities all around us and afterschool programs are well-positioned to provide additional enriching educational experiences to all young people, helping them reach their full potential in life.



MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

Learning is not confined to a specific setting, time of day or interaction. Students spend almost 80 percent of their time outside of the classroom;³ however, many students—in particular those from low-income families who face barriers such as availability, cost and transportation, as well as lack of exposure to more sophisticated means of using the Internet and technology—are missing out on the learning opportunities occurring outside of the school day. This is especially true in today's society, where 95 percent of teens access the Internet through a variety of modes—including mobile devices, tablet computers and laptops—to do everything from learn about current events or politics to social networking to share content they created.⁴ This lack of access, in combination with research that shows significant student disengagement from their school day lessons, results in missed opportunities to create a society of lifelong learners who will be productive stewards of our society.

A separation from opportunity

Much has been written about the achievement gap in America and the impact it has on an individual's future educational attainment, job earnings, and overall health and welfare. Discussion surrounding the academic achievement divide that exists between students living in low-income families and those in high-income families, and the disparities in academic achievement between African-American and Latino students and their white peers, has been going on for decades.⁵ However, also significant is the divergence of opportunities that children in low-income families are exposed to versus the opportunities their higher income peers are afforded.

In his July 2012 article entitled "The Opportunity Gap," New York Times Columnist David Brooks examined newly released research by Harvard Political Scientist Robert Putnam that analyzed the opportunities among children in America.⁶ Putnam found that among upper-income families, the time spent with and money spent on their children has grown immensely, in particular when compared to lower-income families. For example, roughly 40 years ago, kids from the lowest- and highest-earner quartiles participated in approximately the same number of activities. However, since the 1970s, the amount of money higher-income parents spend on their child's out-of-school activities has increased to nearly \$5,000 more than lower-income parents (\$5,300 vs. \$480 in 2012). This translates to every \$1 lower-income parents spend on their child's out-of-school activities, higher income parents spend slightly more than \$11—more than 11 times as much.



Compared to children from lower-income households, today kids from affluent families are close to two times as likely to play afterschool sports, more than twice as likely to be the captains of their sports teams, and much more likely to participate in activities like theater and music lessons.

It bears repeating that teachers are not trained and schools are not equipped to make up for societal inequalities. This is why we should commit to doing all that we can in our spheres of influence toward class equity. And once we have done that, we can expand those spheres.

-- Paul Gorski, Associate Professor, George Mason University



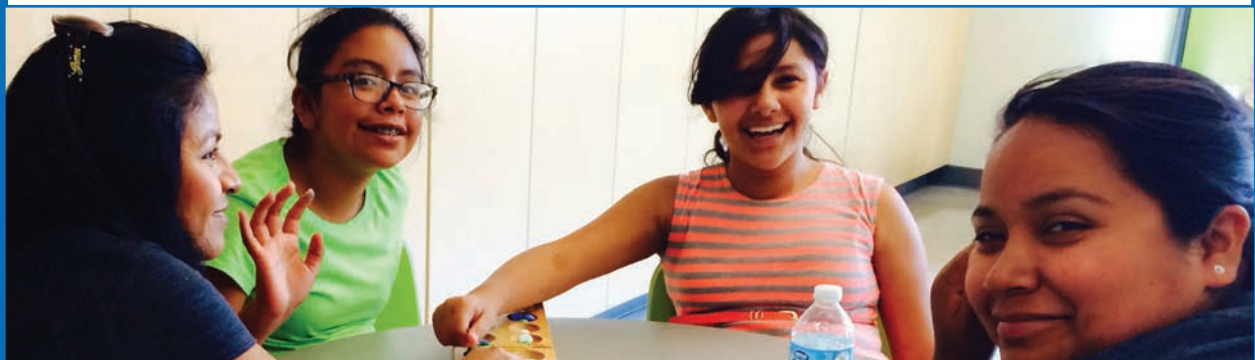
The opportunity gap extends to more than enrollment in extracurricular activities. Putnam also finds that kids from less-affluent families have become more cynical and distrustful of social institutions, such as the educational system and even their community, resulting in a pessimistic outlook, a lower likelihood of volunteering and suspicion of society as a whole—further limiting their opportunities for growth and development. For instance, a 2013 study by the Corporation for National and Community Service found that after controlling for demographic variables, individuals who volunteered had 27 percent higher odds of employment.⁷

A separation from school lessons

In addition to the achievement and opportunity gaps mentioned above, surveys and reports have found an engagement gap in schools—where students lack interest in their coursework during the school day. A 2013 Gallup Student Poll found that overall, 28 percent of students are not engaged in school and 17 percent are actively disengaged from school. Making the case that the lack of engagement in school is likely related to the achievement gap, as well as future indicators of success, Gallup's poll stated, "...hope, engagement, and well-being are key factors that drive students' grades, achievement scores, retention, and future employment."⁸

The Center for Evaluation and Education Policy (CEEP) at Indiana University conducted a survey in 2009 that looked at student engagement and found that 2 out of 3 high school students said that they were bored at least every day in class. Just 2 percent of students reported that they were never bored in school.⁹ Of the students who reported that they were bored, 81 percent said they were bored because the “material wasn’t interesting.”

Student responses that are more specific as to why the material in school was not interesting to them give insight into the reasons behind students’ boredom and disengagement from school, as well as show what steps can be taken to increase engagement, boost achievement and support students’ future success. Of the high schoolers who reported that they were bored, 42 percent said that they were bored because the material wasn’t relevant to them. One-third of the students shared that they were bored because the work was not challenging enough.¹⁰ Similarly, a 2012 report by the Center for American Progress found that the high school students surveyed did not feel challenged in their classes



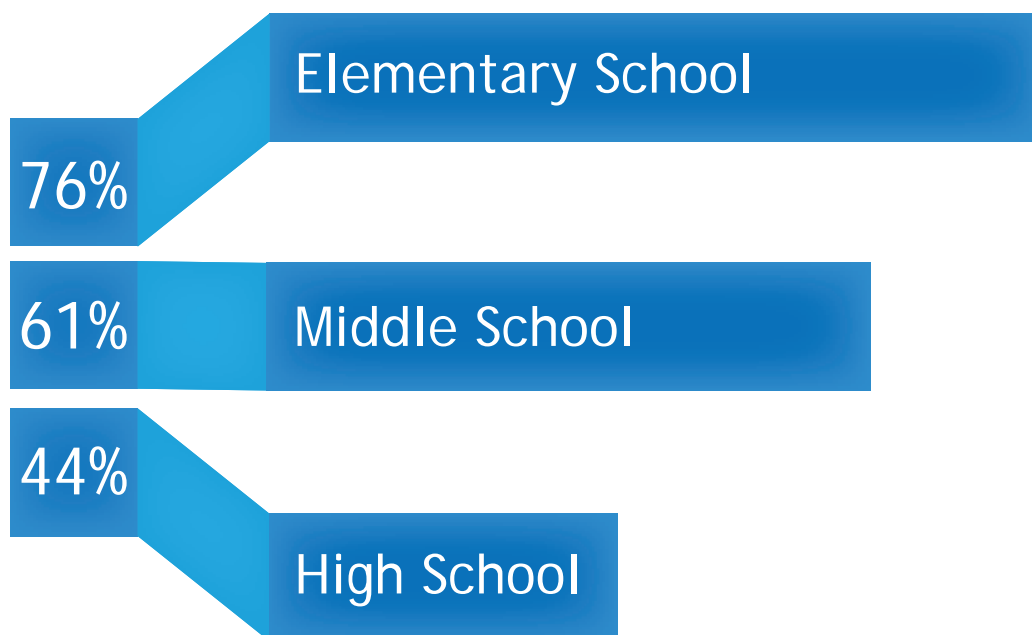
Education isn't bound to particular institutions anymore, it happens everywhere. We already know that most of the learning that people do doesn't happen in the classroom... [Learning] is part of the fabric of our interactions with everybody—with our kids every day, with our colleagues...with people in our community.

-- Mizuko Ito, Research Director, Digital Media and Learning Hub, University of California, Irvine

and did not feel that they were learning in class. For example, 56 percent of high school students reported that their civics work was often or always too easy, 55 percent said that their history work was too easy and 21 percent revealed that their math work was not challenging enough.¹¹ Less than half of 12th graders shared that they feel that they are always or almost always learning in math class.¹²

These statistics reveal that too many high schoolers are disconnected from the learning that can and should take place during the school day. But this is not how students begin their journey through the educational system. The 2012 Gallup Student Poll found that student engagement decreases as students move from elementary school to high school. In elementary school, 76 percent of students say that they are engaged in school; in middle school, this number decreases 15 points to 61 percent, and by high school, just 44 percent of students say that they are engaged in school.¹³ When students do not see the significance of their school work, when what they learn is not made relevant to their lives, and when they do not feel challenged enough, they become disengaged and miss out on the educational opportunities that all students should take advantage of. When looking at the 1 in 5 students who have considered dropping out of school (21 percent), CEEP found that the top three reasons students gave were that they disliked the school (50 percent), they did not see the value in the work they were being asked to do (42 percent) and they disliked their teachers (39 percent).¹⁴ These students, many of whom do not fully understand the ramifications of their disengagement, are being left behind by their peers in school, not reaching their full potential, and placing themselves at a greater disadvantage in a world that is moving faster, is continuously advancing and is more connected than ever before.

Student engagement while in school



Busteed, B. (2013). The School Cliff: Student Engagement Drops With Each School Year. The Gallup Blog. Retrieved from <http://thegallupblog.gallup.com/2013/01/the-school-cliff-student-engagement.html>.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER: CONNECTED LEARNING

To help all young people thrive in their future endeavors, it is necessary to make sure that they are able to take advantage of the abundance of learning opportunities—both in and out of school—as well as create new environments that excite and engage them in learning. Research has found that a person’s interests, their peers and mentors, and academics are three powerful drivers of learning. Connected learning, an educational approach grounded in this research, states that: 1) learning takes place at any time and in any space, and 2) must be made relevant to young people in order to address the opportunity gap and engagement gap in society and in schools.

Connected learning embraces the idea that learning takes place everywhere, therefore creating more points of entry to learning. This increases opportunities for young people to engage in learning and meets young people where they are by tapping into their interests and their social networks. Helping young people understand how lessons learned are relevant to their lives, providing opportunities to take part in hands-on learning, and connecting learning to their community and what they care about engages students in learning and turns more young people into lifelong learners.

This education approach is the intentional linkage of learning that often happens in settings independent of one another—through ones’ interests, ones’ peer groups and ones’ academics—capitalizing on the benefits of all three to create a learning experience that is both powerful and enduring. Through this integration—and amplified by technology that helps connect young people to new information, knowledge and peers who share their passions—learning and interest is linked to academic achievement, career success and civic engagement, providing a more robust and fulfilling educational experience.

Connecting to peer networks

Friendships and connecting with peers who share their interests is a key component to young people’s everyday lives. Connecting online through games, Facebook or Twitter allows young people to share ideas, information and opinions. Numerous studies have documented learning taking place—including gaining new knowledge and developing new skills—when people are in social settings, talking with friends, peers and others that one may meet throughout everyday life.¹⁵ When connecting to friends and peers, young people are actively engaged in the sharing taking place and actively listening to gain new insights.



Rather than viewing interest-driven practices as distractions or a waste of time, those seeking to promote youth engagement be they youth organizations, schools or other concerned parties must recognize their value and potential. Engagement in online interest-driven participatory cultures may provide a valuable new pathway through which youth develop as engaged members of our political community.

-- *New Media and Youth Political Action*

Connecting to interests

Polls and surveys have found that student disengagement from school and their schoolwork is due to the disconnect that exists between what takes place in the classroom and what takes place in young people's lives.¹⁶ Activities that are directly related to or are embedded in a young person's interests become fascinating. Young people become more invested in what they are doing and what they are learning when they see how it relates to their everyday activities. It is then that learning becomes an active undertaking where students take ownership of their learning and can feel a sense of empowerment because of their mastery of the subject.

A three-year, in-depth ethnographic study of youth and digital media—which integrated close to two dozen separate case studies, interviewed more than 800 youth and conducted more than 5,000 hours of online observations—found that young people move from “hanging out”—the informal and light interactions with friends—to “messaging around” and “geeking out”—a deeper and more dedicated concentration on a certain topic—when that topic is of interest to them and is part of their day-to-day life.¹⁷ The study shows the specialized skill sets developed and the knowledge gained when young people participate in interest-driven activities by messaging around and geeking out. The report also illustrates how interest fuels young people's efforts, which in turn can lead to positive outcomes and significant achievements. (*see Interest-Engagement-Achievement on next page.*)

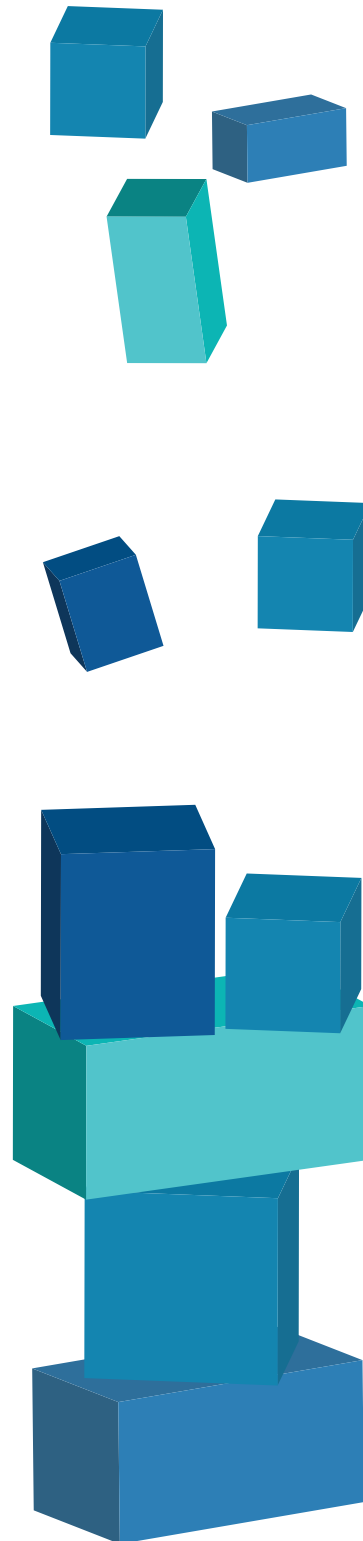
Interest - Engagement - Achievement

Jacob first became interested in website design when he learned about digital media for a fifth grade class project. In high school he found the online social network MySpace, and in addition to using the site as a way to connect with friends, he was interested in designing different MySpace layouts and personalizing his page. Jacob joined an afterschool program to learn more about Web design and he focused on developing skills to help him better customize his MySpace profile. At first, he reached out to friends to help him to edit his page, but as time went on, he learned HTML and CSS code to create various backgrounds, borders, fonts and images himself.

At his afterschool program, he also had access to a variety of tools to help with Web design, including Photoshop, Flash and Dreamweaver. Although his afterschool program moved on from Web design to teaching a different area of digital media, Jacob continued to work on his Web design.

At the time of the interview, Jacob had a job interview for a Web design position at UPS. He shared, "It's the UPS headquarters and the man said you have a job here if you do this design and finish school. And I was like, 'I can do that. But...but how long...I'm young.' 'Don't [sic] matter; I'm the boss...If I want to employ you, it don't [sic] matter how young you are as long as you pass high school.' So I was like, 'Cool, cool; I might just do that.'"

-- Interview from *"Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out."*



Making it relevant for their future: Connecting to academics, civic engagement and career

Academics, civic engagement and career readiness are aspects related to a young person's future success. Connecting a young person's interests and peer networks to academics, civic engagement or career readiness ties present day pursuits to future returns. For example, the academic basics, such as reading and writing, are necessary skills that all young people will need in the workplace. In addition to higher odds of employment as referenced above, individuals who are civically engaged also find a sense of purpose and have been found to have lower rates of depression and overall better physical health.¹⁸ Yet this third and more formal area—academics, civic engagement and career readiness—is often isolated from the two avenues for learning described above—interests and social networks.

Connecting interests and social networks to the learning avenue of academics, civic engagement and career creates a much more robust learning experience that builds on the basics and provides opportunities to put school day learning to use in projects that are of personal interest to youth and are an investment in their future. For example, a study of participatory politics among young people—where young people take action on a public issue in an interactive and social manner, such as writing a blog, creating an online petition or sharing an article through social media—compared youth who were highly engaged in interest-driven activities online to those with low levels of involvement and found that youth with high levels of engagement were more than five times as likely to take part in participatory politics and close to four times as likely to be engaged in politics overall.¹⁹ Authors of the report conclude that interest-driven activity was the largest predictor in determining whether a young person would take part in participatory politics and view interest-driven activities as a way to promote youth engagement in the civic and political realms.



THE ROLE AFTERSCHOOL CAN PLAY

Afterschool programs are an integral component in the ecology of learning—with the ability to bridge the divides that exist in terms of access to additional learning opportunities, access to caring mentors, and access to resources and peer networks that can excite young people about the acquisition of knowledge. They are a perfect example of a field that has wholeheartedly embraced the reality that learning takes place both inside the classroom and out. When the last school day bell rings, students leave their classrooms, but their minds do not turn off.

The flexibility of afterschool programs allows young people to use the out-of-school hours to connect to their interests while also building on school-day lessons. They are perfectly situated to leverage the aspects of a young person's life that they are most engaged in, in addition to taking advantage of the many hours and days of the year young people are not in school. Afterschool programs are well-suited to embody and drive connected learning—engaging students by focusing on their interests, fostering an environment where they can take part in hands-on activities, and providing opportunities to connect with others who share their interests and passions. In afterschool programs, interests, activities and social interactions are intertwined with academics, civic engagement and building workplace skills, making learning relevant in a young person's life and fostering knowledge that is both meaningful, lasting and critical for success in their adult lives.

Below is a small sampling of the variety of ways afterschool programs have offered connected learning opportunities that join together their students' interests, their peer networks and their academics:

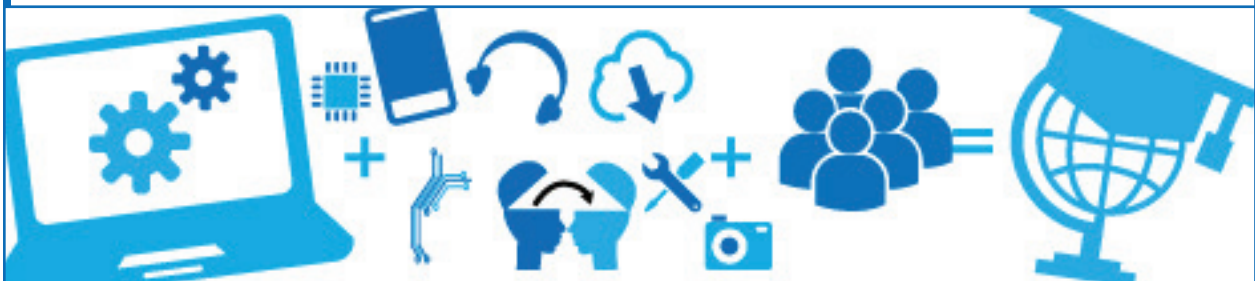


Providing a production-centered environment in which young people have access to digital tools and can engage in activities where they are creating, remixing and sharing.

TAKEAWAYS:

- ~ Offering a selection of activities and/or tools has the dual advantage of drawing in young people to the program and introducing them to a new subject or interest they might not otherwise have been exposed to.
- ~ Encouraging young people to create—whether it is performing a dance, designing a website or remixing a video—allows them to express who they are and feel ownership and pride in a project.
- ~ Listening to students and incorporating their ideas in some form into the program shows that their input is valued and helps grow student buy-in, involvement and engagement.

Young people who step into **Createch Studio**, in Minneapolis, Minn., find themselves in a space where they can produce videos, take photography, write and create plays, build basic engineering skills, and develop design skills. The studio, which is a partnership between the St. Paul Public Library and the St. Paul Parks and Recreation Department, has multiple components. One lab is located inside the St. Paul Public Library and the program also has three mobile labs. Createch Studio gives young people access to a wide variety of digital tools, including, but not limited to, video cameras, computers, iPads, 3-D printers, and computerized sewing machines, and the program is in the final stages of building a recording studio where students can become skilled in operating sound equipment and produce or remix their own music tracks. The studio appeals to young people in various ways: providing a safe space where young people can socialize with their friends, connecting young people to others who share their interests and allowing young people to access digital tools and further explore areas of interest.



Much of what we've started so far is doable on a small budget. If you can spare the staff, you are set. Our first Createch mobile lab was five iPads, one MacBook and some speakers. We have been able to generate quite a few activities and a lot of interest around hanging out by simply putting this technology in a room once a week with a caring, supportive staff member.

-- Marika Staloch, Youth Services Coordinator, St. Paul Public Library

Incorporating youth voices in the program is another integral way Createch Studio has gained student buy in. During the development and implementation of the program, a teen advisory group was created to give input on the qualities of the program—both large and small. Teens were involved in naming the program, deciding on the program's rules, and the design and decorative details of the program's space—such as furniture and color palate. The program also takes the youth voice seriously when determining programming offered. For example, the program's dance class grew from students expressing interest in the medium. A student from the program led dance classes and shared his passion for the subject with his peers.

Createch provides more than technology for their students; staff quality is key for their program. Program leaders take time to select staff members who will be able to use the technology, but who will also be able to serve as mentors to the youth coming through the doors. In addition, experts are brought into the program to work alongside staff and students, such as employees from the Science Museum of Minnesota. The popularity of the teen program—which has more than 450 teens registered and 60 teens attending the program each day—has spurred a “tween” program for middle school youth.



Fostering an openly networked experience where young people can share projects, as well as learn from others’ work, inside and outside of their program.

TAKEAWAYS:

- ~ Providing a forum for youth to showcase their work not only gives them a goal to strive for, but allows them to share their work with a wider audience that can include parents, friends and the community.
- ~ Creating a collaborative environment—in which students share their work and ask for feedback and help with projects—strengthens communication skills, critical thinking skills and fosters positive relationships between students.
- ~ Finding ways for youth in the program to connect with others who share their interest—whether it’s an expert in the field or another student—can help bolster engagement and excitement.

The **Pittsburgh Youth Media** from Consortium for Public Ed in Pittsburgh, Penn., is a coalition of a dozen universities, foundations, media groups and other community organizations. Through the program, high schoolers have access to multiple media organizations and are able to explore the world of investigative journalism and media making. Students follow their interests, ranging from human rights to economic development, gaining deeper insight into domestic and international affairs and covering news in real time, seeing the direct impact on their city, state and the world. The program teaches students what makes a good story, how to become strong journalists and how to navigate the world of multimedia. Students are also able to collaborate, ask for help and feedback on the program’s “Reporter Resources” open forum, and share their work on Pittsburgh Youth Media’s main website, both of which can be accessed by the public.



Big Thought's after-school programs began with a focus on arts experiences—engaging students in hands-on, artistic processes that connected their lives to the world around them. As our programs developed, they expanded beyond the arts because that's where our student's interests were. We've had leadership programs, cooking classes, sports, collaborative Minecraft projects, service learning initiatives, and whatever else the kids push us toward. But at the center of it all is that same, fundamental process: student-driven, hands-on experiences that bring the kids together with experienced, adult mentors who can bridge out-of-school and in-school learning.

--Gigi Antoni, President and CEO of Big Thought

In addition to working with media organizations, students in the program are able to connect to the education and community groups within the consortium by visiting programs, interviewing staff, taking part in activities and attending events. For example, one student took part in a Hip-Hop on L.O.C.K. music production workshop at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, reporting on the activities provided and lessons learned through the workshop, and sharing the final write-up on Pittsburgh Youth Media's website. The program also finds ways for their students to meet others from different countries interested in the same topics. In late 2012, students in the program attended the One Young World Summit, an international youth summit where they were able to meet people of all ages who were also invested in working to make the world a more peaceful, equal and just place. Throughout the five-day conference, students shared their experiences, such as seeing Kofi Annan address the summit and conversing with a young person from Kenya working with an organization to help empower young females—through blogs, videos and pictures.

A new and growing movement that provides a citywide example of facilitating an openly networked experience is the Cities of Learning initiative,—which includes Pittsburgh, Penn., as well as Chicago, Ill., Columbus, Ohio, Dallas, Texas, Los Angeles, Calif. and Washington, D.C. The Cities of Learning help connect local students to afterschool and summer learning programs in their area that speak to their interests and facilitate those students' ability to take part in a variety of activities both in programs or online, helping them build a robust learning experience. For example, in the Dallas City of Learning, Big Thought—a Dallas-based nonprofit organization that develops partnerships and leverages resources across the city to deliver innovative learning programs—and the Dallas mayor's office are working to bring together more than 50 partner organizations across Dallas to help students pursue their interests that will offer afterschool activities both online and in participating neighborhoods.



Bringing together learners both young and old on projects, in a collaborative environment or in a competitive setting, where all parties involved work toward a shared purpose.

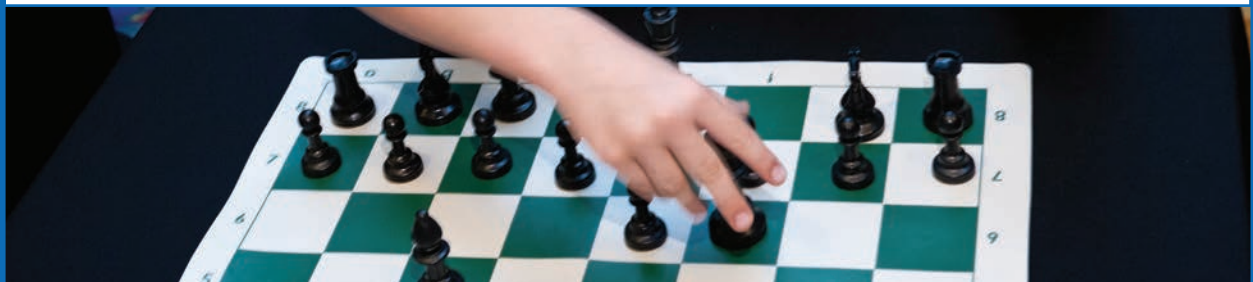
TAKEAWAYS:

- ~ Young people have the motivation and the power to be strong advocates for issues they believe in. A cause to support and work for—whether a community or a program issue—helps give young people a shared sense of purpose.
- ~ Allowing young people to participate in a program in a variety of ways can attract youth who may have originally shied away from the program, creating an environment that fosters inclusion.
- ~ Establishing an environment that is challenging, where students can further develop their skills and knowledge, keeps students interested, motivated, and aspiring to do better and be better.

A number of afterschool programs exemplify connected learning principles, many without knowingly doing so. For instance, at **Intermediate School 318's (I.S. 318)** afterschool chess program in Brooklyn, N.Y., students sit at chess boards across from their friends, mentors who are experts in the game, and other chess aficionados learning strategy, concentration and perseverance—all skills that will help them in their academic and professional pursuits. In post-match recap sessions, mentors and peers push players to actively think about how lessons learned on the chess board translate to future chess matches. Compelling young people to think critically about how one decision can have a domino effect in chess also encourages them to appreciate the significance of every choice they make off the chess board on their everyday life.

Students in the program can watch and socialize with their friends and peers who play chess, but also have the option of deeper immersion in the content—traveling to professional tournaments across the country and working toward becoming a chess master. Tournaments that students participate in are both individual and team competitions, where students work together to bring home a trophy for their program, and have the opportunity to compete and push each other to bring back individual trophies. At I.S. 318—which is home to the chess program that has traveled to and won a number of championships—“chess is king.”²⁰ Students from other neighborhoods travel to attend I.S. 318 in order to be a part of the afterschool program that has become known for its excellence. Through the program, students, parents and other program supporters have

joined together in other ways. The documentary film “Brooklyn Castle” captured the program facing budget cuts, which would affect the ability of the program to travel to tournaments and the number of hours the program could operate. Program supporters came together over the shared goal of fighting the budget cuts by sending emails and letters to politicians.²¹ In the process, both students and adults learned a great deal about the budget process and the importance of advocacy.

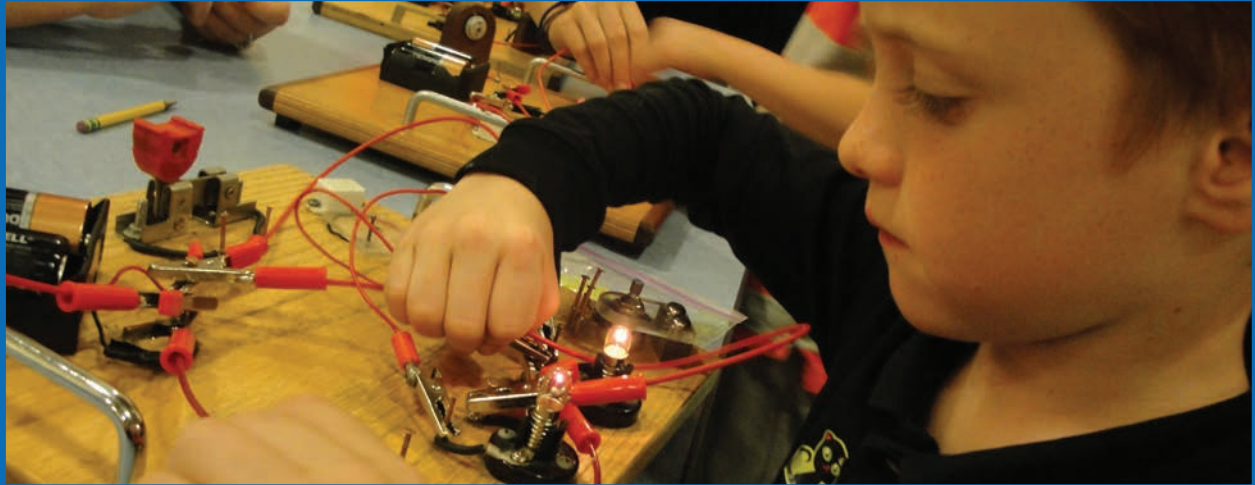


I gained the ability to be patient through sitting down at the chess board and just being able to sit there for hours analyzing the different positions I was presented with. Also, I gained the ability to plan. I can plan ahead and plan how I will execute certain objectives and get to where I need to go in life. The chess program has also given me a resounding work ethic. I'm always working all the time doing things that are constructive for me and for other people and that's very important. The chess program was also a great place for me to socialize with my friends after a hard day's work in the classroom. All of these key skills I learned from the game of chess, and the chess program at I.S. 318 helped me become who I am today.

--Pobo Efeboro, former I.S. 318 student



CONCLUSION



As students move from grade to grade, they are falling off what has been referred to as the “school cliff,” becoming less engaged in school the longer they remain in school.²³ An approach to learning is needed that not only addresses this growing disengagement in education, but also tackles the increasing opportunity gap between high and low-income students to participate in extracurricular activities and take advantage of continuously-evolving digital technology that is creating new ways to gain skills and knowledge. Connected learning is an educational approach that embraces the fact that learning takes place everywhere; empowering students to take part in the learning opportunities available to them both in and out of school, making learning relevant to them by integrating their interests and their peer networks, and tying their interests and peer networks to their future pursuits.

At a time when a number of Americans do not believe that students graduating from high school are prepared to join the working world,²⁴ connected learning takes advantage of all hours of the day, all settings and all interactions to best support and prepare young people for their future success. Many afterschool programs embrace and foster the principles of connected learning—offering flexible learning environments outside of the school day where young people can follow their interests, interact with their friends and peers, and build on school day lessons. Afterschool programs can work to be more deliberate in employing a connected learning approach and help create a more equal playing field by giving young people access to learning opportunities before school, after school and during the summer that engage them in learning. The combination of these efforts is helping pave the way to create a society of life-long learners who will be ready for the future changes and challenges of the world.

RESOURCES

[Connected Learning: An Agenda for Research and Design](#)

A report synthesizing research, design and implementation of connected learning.

[connectedlearning.tv](#)

A website focused on advocacy for connected learning; connected learning research; and hosting webinars featuring programs demonstrating connected learning principles, educators sharing how to foster a connected learning environment and researchers discussing connected learning outcomes.

[Connected Learning Research Network](#)

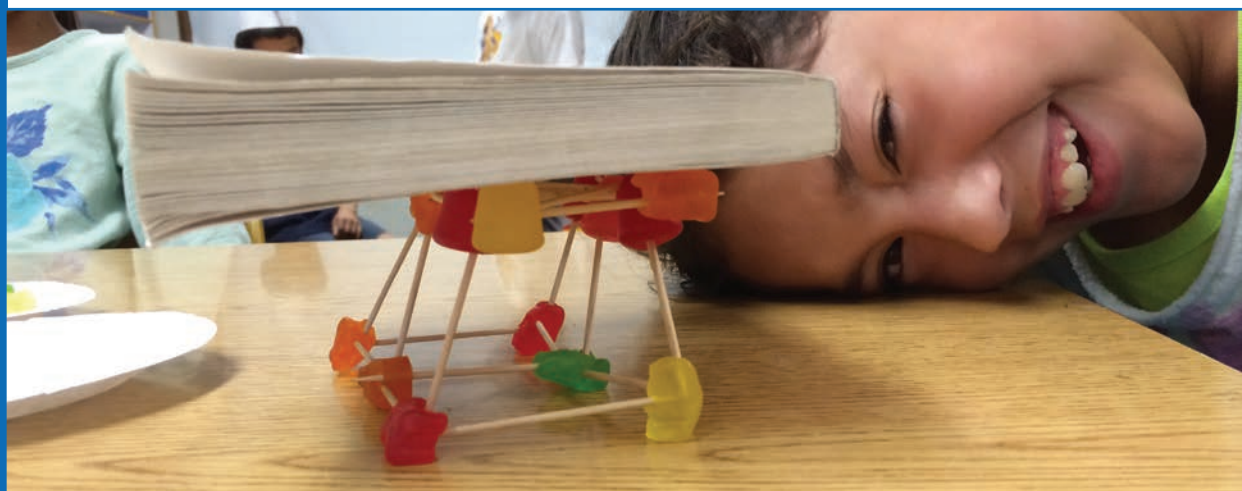
A research network focused on connected learning, supporting effective learning and educational equity, and dedicated to understanding the opportunities and risks for learning presented by today's media ecology.

[Connected Learning Alliance](#)

A project dedicated to the expansion and influence of a network of educators, experts and youth-serving organizations mobilizing new technology in the service of equity, access and opportunity for all young people.

[Educator Innovator](#)

A website run by the National Writing Project dedicated to creating an online space for educators, partners and supporters to connect and share how to teach young people to be innovators.



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The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at afterschoolalliance.org.



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