



# Windows on Learning

What afterschool and educational leaders are saying about the *Learning in Afterschool & Summer Project* and the LIAS learning principles

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Temescal Associates, September 2012

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# About

## *Windows on Learning*

The purpose of this paper is to capture the opinions of leaders in education and afterschool on the value and relevance of the Learning in Afterschool & Summer (LIAS) project and the learning principles that are promoted through this project. This purpose statement is followed by a listing of the LIAS learning principles and then a series of quotes from important leaders in the field.

- Sam Piha  
Temescal Associates and the LIAS Project,  
September 2012

# ***Learning in Afterschool & Summer Learning Principles***

## **1. Learning that is Active:**

Learning and memory recall of new knowledge is strengthened through different exposures – seeing, hearing, touching, and doing. Afterschool learning should be the result of activities that involve young people in “doing” – activities that allow them to be physically active, stimulate their innate curiosity, and that are hands-on and project-based. Hands-on learning involves the child in a total learning experience, which enhances the child’s ability to think critically.

## **2. Learning that is Collaborative:**

Knowledge should be socially centered, as collaborative learning provides the best means to explore new information. Afterschool programs are well positioned to build skills that allow young people to learn as a team. This includes listening to others, supporting group learning goals, resolving differences and conflicts, and making room for each member to contribute his or her individual talents. Collaborative learning happens when learners engage in a common task where each individual depends on and is accountable to each other.

## **3. Learning that is Meaningful:**

Young people are intrinsically motivated when they find their learning meaningful. This means having ownership over the learning topic and the means to assess their own progress. Motivation is increased when the learning is relevant to their own interests, experiences, and the real world in which they live. Community and cultural relevance is especially important to new immigrant youth and those from minority cultures. Rather than learning that is focused on academic subjects, young people in afterschool can apply their academic skills to their areas of interest and real world problems. Also, when learning involves responsibility, leadership, and service to others, it is experienced as more meaningful.

## **4. Learning that Supports Mastery:**

Young people tell us they are most engaged when they are given opportunities to learn new skills. If young people are to learn the importance and joy of mastery, they need the opportunity to learn and practice a full sequence of skills that will allow them to become “really good at something.” Afterschool activities should not promote the gathering of random knowledge and skills. Rather, afterschool learning activities should be explicitly sequenced and designed to promote the layering of skills that allows participants to create a product or demonstrate mastery in a way they couldn’t do before. Programs often achieve this by designing activities that lead to a culminating event or product that can be viewed and celebrated by peers and family members. For older youth, many programs are depending on apprenticeship models to assist youth in achieving a sense of mastery.

## **5. Learning that Expands Horizons:**

Young people, especially those from low-income families and neighborhoods, benefit by learning opportunities that take them beyond their current experience and expand their horizons. Learning about new things and new places promotes a greater sense of potential of what they can achieve and brings a sense of excitement and discovery to the learning environment. Afterschool programs have the flexibility to go beyond the walls of their facilities. They can use the surrounding community as a classroom and bring in individuals and businesses that young people may not otherwise come into contact with. Expanding young people’s horizons also includes helping them to develop a global awareness. This includes increasing their knowledge of other cultures and places and their understanding of the issues and problems we have in common across cultural and political divides.

# Windows on Learning: What afterschool and educational leaders are saying about the *Learning in Afterschool & Summer Project* and the LIAS learning principles

## LIAS and EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

*"I use the LIAS principles because I felt they captured many of the core elements that a successful afterschool program should have. Actually, those principles should be reflected in classrooms during the regular school day as well. We spend so much time focused on "achievement" and so little time focused on how to motivate students to learn. The principles advocated by Learning in Afterschool & Summer strike the right balance and make sense. The principles contained in Learning in Afterschool promote such an approach, and if applied with fidelity, could lead to real improvements in educational outcomes for kids."*

- **Pedro Noguera**  
Executive Director,  
Metropolitan Center for Urban Education  
New York University

## LIAS and THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*"The Learning in Afterschool & Summer project expresses the critical features of expanded learning that will be central to the After School Division of CDE and the afterschool field in California. The LIAS principles are easily understood and quickly accepted by educators, researchers and youth development workers alike. I have trained all of my CDE staff on these principles. The LIAS elements demonstrate the quality we want to see in our ASES and 21st Century afterschool programs. My staff and Regional Leads will use the LIAS observation rubric when they visit programs. The LIAS project and learning principles are an important tool for CDE and the larger field."*

- **Michael Funk**  
Director, After School Division  
California Department of Education

## LIAS and SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

*"There is considerable overlap between the LIAS principles and what we mean by social-emotional learning. Sometimes only the terms are different. For example, learning that is active and that supports mastery relates to both the 'A' and 'F' of our SAFE acronym in that students need to practice new skill and we must devote sufficient time and attention to foster student mastery."*

*The LIAS principles of collaboration, meaningfulness, and expanded horizons are each consistent with the types of skills that compose SEL such as skills relating to managing one's emotions, developing and maintaining satisfactory relationships with others, and enhancing self-awareness. In general, the LIAS principles and the five SEL domains allows flexibility and adaptations to occur for work with different types of youth at different developmental stages, and with different needs and interests."*

- **Joseph Durlak**  
Emeritus Professor of Clinical Psychology  
Loyola University, Chicago

## LIAS and EXTENDED LEARNING TIME

*“The Learning in Afterschool & Summer effort is perfectly aligned and perfectly timed with the federal policy conversation around extended learning. The LIAS principles and language support the very critical task of helping decision makers at all levels understand that after school programs are a place of learning, are worthy of continued and strengthened investments, and can be the foundation for new and innovative models of teaching and learning.”*

- **Jennifer Peck**  
Executive Director,  
Partnership for Children and Youth

## LIAS and STEM

*“At the Coalition for Science After School, we find that there is a lot of confusion and misunderstanding as to what high-quality STEM programming afterschool means. But once we apply LIAS principles to examine science afterschool, we can quickly identify what quality should look like and which promising practices we should support that may lead to increased youth interest and engagement in STEM.*

*LIAS principles outline the program characteristics most likely to foster scientific inquiry and sense-making in youth and help them recognize the relevance of science and technology to their future. LIAS principles help clarify what high-quality science in out-of-school settings should look like and makes STEM accessible to youth development and afterschool staff. What I like best about LIAS is that it allows OST professionals to view STEM as a way to achieve their youth outcomes using existing best practices in youth development--science afterschool is seen as part of good youth development, rather than an added burden on afterschool program staff.”*

- **Carol Tang**  
Director,  
The Coalition for Science After School

*“Check out the LabRats Science Education Program on Facebook. We use the exact same principles that Learning in Afterschool and Summer has recognized as essential for quality learning experiences. We use the principles to inspire young people to love learning about science and technology.*

*We're just getting started, but because we are founded on these principles, we believe we are going to do great things for science education. We agree that these principles are foundational to successful learning, and we would be happy to promote your work any way we can.”*

- **Dr. Carlson**  
Founder and Executive Director,  
LabRats, San Diego, CA

## LIAS and EXTENDED LEARNING TIME

*“A whole-school re-design, built upon a platform of expanded time, enables educators the opportunity to introduce fresh methods of teaching and learning. We are seeing many examples of hands on learning, deeper science experimentation, mastery around music and the arts across a number of expanded-time schools which align very well with the LIAS vision.”*

- **Jennifer Davis**  
Co-Founder and President,  
The National Center on Time & Learning

## LIAS and EXPANDING HORIZONS

*"I think the Learning in Afterschool & Summer guiding principles are essential. I think it is so important to have a set of core ideas that you can work around. The guiding principles and the way they've been compiled by the LIAS project are really important. Obviously, the work of being in relationships with people, working deeply on stuff – stuff that you care about - that matters. The thing that is fundamentally important to me is expanding horizons - the opportunity for young people to see possible futures. Sometimes young people don't have folks around them to help them understand what's possible for them."*

- **Tony Smith**  
Superintendent,  
Oakland Unified School District

## LIAS and CAREER DEVELOPMENT

*"The LIAS principles make concrete the kind of learning that can and should happen beyond traditional school hours: active, collaborative learning that prepares kids for careers we can't even imagine."*

- **Lucy Friedman**  
Founding President,  
The After School Corporation

## LIAS and MASTERY

*"The LIAS principles are all critical. These principles reflect what our own field experience and research suggest about the characteristics of effective learning environments. They speak to both staff practices and program content, which is important. I think that working toward mastery, which goes right to the intersection of program content and staff practices – is something we need to be more intentional about in out-of-school time (OST) settings."*

- **Karen Pittman**  
President and CEO,  
Forum for Youth Investment

## LIAS and COMMUNICATING WITH POLICYMAKERS

*"When you think about what it means to create an environment where a child is excited, supported, and ultimately takes ownership of their learning, LIAS hits the nail on the head. The principles resonate across communities of practice and in our fragmented policy context. I think both the concepts, and the effort to share them broadly, are an important step in bringing people together around a common vision – a vision that is inspiring for kids and for the practitioners, advocates and policymakers who are supporting and cheering them on!"*

- **Samantha Dobbins Tran**  
Director, Education Policy  
Children Now

## LIAS and THE ROLE OF YOUTH-LED EVALUATION

*"The LIAS principles are not only essential approaches to learning in out of school time, but expectations we hope are upheld in the traditional classroom as well. Moreover, the self-assessment tool and youth-led research and evaluation model are crucial examples of empowerment as part of our commitment to quality programming."*

- **Jacqueline M. Connor**  
Director of Performance Management  
ARC

## LIAS and THE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

*"I think the LIAS principles are complementary, if not completely aligned with the Common Core. They represent the kind of teaching that will be necessary in order for students to achieve the Common Core. The main difference is that the LIAS principles really address the how of teaching and the Common Core is more focused on the what. But absolutely, teachers will need to shift their instruction to more closely match the LIAS principles in order for students to develop habits of mind and master the content standards."*

- **Elizabeth Devaney**  
Independent Consultant  
Forum for Youth Investment

## LIAS and BRAIN RESEARCH

*"As the neuroimaging evidence has shown, the more a student is engaged in a learning activity, especially one with multiple sensory modalities, the more parts of his/her brain are actively stimulated. When this occurs in a positive emotional setting, without stress and anxiety, the result is greater long-term, relational, and retrievable learning."*

- **Judy Willis, M.D., M.Ed.**  
Board-Certified Neurologist,  
Graduate School of Education  
University of California, Santa Barbara

## LIAS and BRAIN SCIENCE

*"The Learning in Afterschool & Summer principles are powerful because they are rooted in brain science. They key into how we all learn, and set a course for improved youth development practice based on how kids best master the skills and knowledge they need."*

- **Corey Newhouse**  
Evaluator and Founder.  
Public Profit

## LIAS and DEEPER LEARNING

*"All five principles are critical. They collectively provide the relevance so desperately needed for students to become engaged and for learning to become alive for them. They also provide the deeper understanding and the discovery of learning that is critical for success in school and life."*

- **Dr. Willard Daggett, Ed. D.**  
Founder and Chairman  
International Center for Leadership in Education

## LIAS and FULLY REALIZING THE PROMISE OF ALL YOUTH

*"I think all of the LIAS learning principles are extremely relevant. I think that the LIAS principles are essential to guaranteeing an education for freedom and for fully realizing the promise of all students and that of our great nation of immigrants."*

- **Pilar O' Cadiz, Ph.D.**  
Project Scientist  
Department of Education,  
University of California, Irvine

## LIAS and THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SKILLS

*“The five Learning in Afterschool & Summer principles are perfectly aligned with a 21st century learning approach – active, meaningful, collaborative learning projects that provide opportunities to expand one’s horizons and master important knowledge and skills – this is the heart of 21st century learning.”*

- **Bernie Trilling**  
Global Director, Oracle Education Foundation  
Co-Author, *21st Century Skills: Learning for Life in Our Times*

## LIAS and SUMMER LEARNING

*“Summer offers more time to bring the LIAS learning principles to life. With a 6 to 8 hour day – free from the requirements of the school or even after school environment – summer allows staff and youth to collaborate more completely. This varied and deep engagement is hard to find in more traditional learning environments, but, as the LIAS movement has clearly demonstrated, it is well-suited to summer and critical to young people’s long-term interest and success in learning.”*

- **Katie Brackenridge**  
Senior Director, Out-of-School Time Initiatives  
The Partnership for Children and Youth

## LIAS and AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM QUALITY

*“The LIAS principles speak directly to the components required to create a quality instructional delivery framework. When implemented, programs can truly engage the youth of today. While many successful afterschool and summer programs already embody and demonstrate the LIAS principles, these principles now being clearly identified, defined, and articulated, will provide for an understandable and intentional approach to attain successful quality programming across the field. In addition, the LIAS principles provide a common language for the field of afterschool that has been up until now missing and desperately needed. I have personally seen the LIAS principles easily taught to line staff, which might not have been intuitive to them previously. I have witnessed the empowering affect it has had on them, resulting in improved program quality. The LIAS principles have also given them the ability to understand for themselves, and communicate with others, their vital role and the value of afterschool and summer programming.”*

- **Bill Fennesy**  
Director of High School Programs  
THINK Together

## LIAS and AFTERSCHOOL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

*“The role of supporting and providing technical assistance to afterschool programs have been strengthened by the LIAS project and learning principles. The goal of the Learning in Afterschool & Summer (LIAS) project “to position afterschool programs as places for learning” is the real desired outcome of our technical assistance and training efforts as Regional Leads, intermediaries or other afterschool technical assistance providers. The Learning in Afterschool & Summer project’s five core learning principles should be a foundation for staff/professional development and training in afterschool programs. Learning in afterschool and summer should be Active, Collaborative, Meaningful, Geared for Mastery, and Expand Horizons and it’s therefore vital that technical assistance be well versed in the LIAS learning principles”.*

- **Joe Hudson,**  
Region 4 Lead & Program Manager  
Before and After School Programs Office  
Educational Services Division  
Alameda County Office of Education



## **LIAS and GOOD HABITS OF MIND**

*“The core LIAS learning principles set forth a picture of active, collaborative, meaningful learning that supports young people in practicing habits of mind and work that will last them a lifetime. Solidly based in research, these principles are the same ones that we see in the best schools in the nation. They underscore the “anytime, anywhere” nature of learning. And they remind us that schools and communities must work as partners. All our young people must have rich opportunities to use their minds well, crossing cultural and political divides to help solve the problems that confront us all.”*

- **Kathleen Cushman**  
Journalist and Documentarian  
Author, *Fires in the Mind*

## **LIAS and QUALITY INSTRUCTION**

*“I believe the LIAS vision is aligned well with what we know about good teaching and meaningful learning. Ongoing professional development focused explicitly on high quality instruction and coupled with some of the ideas expressed in the LIAS principles are critical for success. In a similar way, afterschool and out-of-school instruction needs to be constructed in a way that is consistent and sustained with high quality instruction as well. In other words, how are teachers, mentors, and facilitators trained to ensure “active, collaborative, meaningful, supports mastery, and expands horizons” are actualized in afterschool programs?”*

- **Richard Milner**  
Associate Professor of Education,  
Vanderbilt University

## **LIAS and ENGAGING OLDER YOUTH**

*“The LIAS learning principles fit very well with what we know about effective and engaging afterschool and summer learning programs. These principles are even more important for older youth.”*

- **Terry Peterson, Ph.D.**  
Director,  
Afterschool and Community Learning Network

## **LIAS and A COMMON VOCABULARY OF PROGRAM QUALITY**

*“At Glitter & Razz, we are completely aligned with the 5 Learning Principles as defined by the Learning in Afterschool & Summer project. I have been a teaching artist and youth worker leading arts-based experiences with children and youth for 20 years and I am passionate about the opportunity for kids to learn in creative and engaging ways during out-of-school time. What I admire so much about the LIAS principles is that they simply breakdown the essential elements common to all high-quality out-of-school time learning experiences – it doesn’t matter the content. The 5 principles very effectively express this idea and put us in the same boat as every other out-of-school time program focused on quality learning – from science to cooking to sports to leadership. As a result the LIAS principles help to create a common vocabulary amongst providers and ultimately strengthen the field.”*

- **Lynn Johnson**  
Co-Founder and CEO,  
Glitter & Razz Productions

## LIAS and GOING BEYOND EDUCATIONAL MEASUREMENT

*"We strive to embody all five learning principles in our program, especially through our hands-on, project-based programming. I love the LIAS principles because they push our thinking beyond homework, grades, and test scores into the realm of self-efficacy, vision, and mastery. To me, these are essential to the success of our youth."*

- **Susan Neufeld**  
Director of Youth & Child Development Services  
HOPE Through Housing Foundation

## LIAS and PARTNERS IN LEARNING

*"The LIAS learning principles are exciting and compelling because they define a framework, which any educator or school can apply, that turns teachers and students into partners in the learning process. When that happens, education becomes dynamic and personally relevant, and the transmission of information is transformed into an exchange that creates understanding and lasting learning."*

- **Cathie Mostovoy**  
Founder and CEO  
Mostovoy Strategies

## LIAS and EXEMPLAR AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

*"All of the LIAS principles are demonstrated in the I.S. 318 chess program. I guess the most important one I witnessed was that learning should expand the horizons of participants. In the film there's this quote from Diego Rasskin Gutman that states there are more possible chess games than there are atoms in the universe. And just being able to impart this idea of limitless possibility on a young mind is such a great gift to give a kid, whether they are contemplating all of the strategic and creative moves they can make on the chessboard or all of the strategic and creative moves they can make in life."*

- **Katie Dellamaggiore**  
Documentary Producer  
Director of "Brooklyn Castle"

About the Learning in Afterschool & Summer Project  
([www.learninginafterschool.org](http://www.learninginafterschool.org))

The Learning in Afterschool & Summer Project is an effort by afterschool advocates and leaders to unify the field of afterschool and focus the movement on promoting young people's learning. This means offering opportunities not found at home or in school and applying our most recent knowledge on learning to our afterschool practices.

The idea of promoting young people's learning and broader development after the classroom day is not new. What is new is the vast number of children who are now able to access afterschool programs. We believe that afterschool programming is a unique institution that must offer more than safe havens or homework help after school. If afterschool programs are to achieve their true potential, they must become known as important places of learning – learning that complements, but is distinguished from, the learning that happens at school or home.

The goal of the Learning in Afterschool & Summer (LIAS) project is to position afterschool programs as places for learning. The project draws upon an extensive and growing body of research and is informed by the national discussions on education reform and youth development. Achieving this goal will require the incorporation of specific learning principles and approaches in the definition and expectations of afterschool programs, and acceptance by a broad array of stakeholders. This project is led by Director, Sam Piha and guided by an Executive Committee consisting of Katie Brackenridge (Partnership for Children and Youth), Bill Fennessy (THINK Together), Brad Lupien (ARC), and Michelle Perrenoud (Los Angeles County Office of Education).

About Temescal Associates ([www.temescalassociates.com](http://www.temescalassociates.com))

Temescal Associates is dedicated to building the capacity of leaders and organizations in education and youth development who are serious about improving the lives of young people. Our clients include leaders of youth serving institutions and organizations, school and youth program practitioners, public and private funders, intermediary organizations, and policy makers. Their work ranges from building large-scale youth and community initiatives to providing services to young people on a day-to-day basis. To accomplish this, Temescal Associates draws on a pool of gifted and highly experienced consultants who excel at eliciting the internal knowledge and wisdom of those we work with while introducing new knowledge and strategies that can transform the day-to-day practices that lead to improved youth outcomes. Temescal Associates is led by Founder and Principal, Sam Piha, MSW

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