



NEWS RELEASE

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WOODROW WILSON FOUNDATION TO IMPROVE SOCIAL STUDIES, CIVICS INSTRUCTION THROUGH GAMES-BASED PD FOR CLASSROOM EDUCATORS

Foundation Launches New HistoryQuest Fellowship in Partnership with Nationally Recognized Institute of Play

PRINCETON, NJ (March 3, 2015) – As teachers across the nation seek ways to make classroom instruction more innovative and interactive, and as states grapple with the question of civics requirements, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation today announced a selective new Fellowship program, focused on games-based pedagogy, that encompasses both goals.

The Woodrow Wilson HistoryQuest Fellowship offers professional development for middle and high school American history teachers, aimed at using the power of games, play, and digital tools to transform both teacher practice and student engagement. The effort is being developed in partnership with the nationally recognized Institute of Play.

“Today’s students—second-generation digital natives—have been immersed in interactive technology for much of their lives,” said Stephanie J. Hull, executive vice president and chief operating officer at the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. “Games can make a significant difference in the way they grasp complex topics like history. They give teachers a new way to approach classroom objectives.”

The WW HistoryQuest Fellowship will be offered at no cost to schools and teachers, and includes an eight-day summer intensive, along with a 10-month follow-up program, for teachers nominated by their school districts and selected in a competitive process by the Foundation. The first cohort of Fellows, comprised of teachers in New Jersey, will start the program in summer 2015.

According to a recent survey, 78% of teachers who use games have seen an increase in student mastery of curricular content and skills. The Woodrow Wilson/Institute of Play-designed effort was created to both help educators incorporate games in their lessons and to equip them to create their own games-based learning experiences for students. In the long term, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation hopes the game-focused initiative will also enhance the Foundation’s ongoing work to improve teacher and education leader preparation.

“Many teachers want to engage their students in challenging, inquiry-based learning, and seek new, inventive ways to do so,” said Rebecca Rufo-Tepper, director of professional development at Institute of Play. “The program isn’t just about learning how to use and make games, but also about how using games can help teachers to reimagine their practice. The Institute of Play is excited to be a part of this effort with the Woodrow Wilson Foundation.”

“With growing demands on the skills and knowledge today’s students must possess, we must empower teachers in new and innovative ways to reach all learners,” Hull said. “Gaming is one tool that can connect with many students who otherwise may be disconnected from much that happens in the classroom. If we can use the approach to teach subjects such as history and civics, we can make great strides in closing the achievement gaps too many of our communities face.”

The HistoryQuest Fellowship is built on a pedagogical foundation that features interactive learning through games and play, game design process and principles, systems thinking, and the purposeful integration of technology. Through participation in the program, educators will: 1) experience firsthand the playing, modification, and design of games mapped to content standards; 2) experiment with integrated games in classroom settings; 3) experiment with off-the-shelf commercial games for classroom use; 4) learn how to create assessment tools for use with games in the classroom; 5) integrate game-like frameworks into curricula; and 6) gain experience using the design process for game design and as a methodology for use with inquiry-based learning.

For more information on the Woodrow Wilson HistoryQuest Fellowship or to learn how to nominate a teacher for the inaugural cohort of Fellows, please visit woodrow.org/fellowship/historyquest

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About the Institute of Play

Institute of Play is a not-for-profit design studio that pioneers new models of learning and engagement. As the founding partner of the Quest to Learn school, the Institute has received national attention for making a significant impact on student gains in critical areas like communication and problem-solving. Through initiatives like the TeacherQuest professional development program, the Institute demonstrates its commitment to transforming schools and supporting teachers through games and play. For more information, please visit www.instituteofplay.org.

About the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation

Founded in 1945, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation (www.woodrow.org) identifies and develops the nation’s best minds to meet its most critical challenges. The Foundation supports its Fellows as the next generation of leaders shaping American society.