Online, On Demand, When Educators Need it Most

Quality Virtual & Hybrid Training for Educators

Customized to Meet Local Needs

www.simschool.org
simSchool began over 10 years ago as a research question among educational scientists at the University of North Texas and the University of Vermont. Their question, “can you learn to teach, or teach more effectively, with a simulation,” served as the impetus for a decade of research and development of one of the most scientifically sophisticated artificially intelligent simulations ever developed. Now used in hundreds of educational programs and schools in over a hundred countries around the world, simSchool has become the most broadly used and continuously evaluated simulation-based tool for teacher training and improvement in the world.

What makes simSchool unique is the underlying science. Drawing upon familiar and well-published models of learning, cognition and emotion (including the OCEAN Model of Psychology, Cattell Horn Carroll, structural functional and constructivist learning theory and more), simSchool provides a safe environment where student teachers can explore familiar concepts in a new and innovative way: creating and teaching virtual, artificially intelligent students that behave as real students would. The sim students are virtual, but the learning is very real.

In simSchool, students can create and practice teach any type of learning profile they might encounter in the classroom – simSchool can create 10 trillion different student profiles on demand. Gender, class size, ethnicity, and learning needs are all customizable. Users can also create over 10 trillion instructional tasks to embed in sim classrooms and evaluate first hand how different types of students perform. Task design, sequencing, pacing, and conversational interventions are all within the control of the player-as-teacher. There are no scripts. There are no barriers to the types of classroom situations and learner needs that students can experience. There are no restrictions on how often individuals can teach a sim class, refine strategies, and evaluate results. There is rich real-time reporting and analysis of effectiveness throughout every minute of simulated teaching.

So, really, the sky is the limit on what can be explored in simSchool.
WHAT SIMSCHOOL OFFERS

simSchool provides a rich variety of learning opportunities for educators and students:

Content authoring tools enable users to create any type of virtual student, task, and classroom to explore.

The simSchool Library allows community members and subject matter experts to share content they’ve created for others to use. Thousands of pieces of content are freely available to students and instructors.

Forums and profile-building features encourage students to connect and reflect with experts and peers in the field.

The sim engine allows any user to play any simulated classroom as many times as they like and to benefit from highly granular reporting after each session.

Course management allows instructors to align content to course goals and to track student progress while still giving every user autonomy & opportunity to shape a self-paced experience and pursue personal teaching and learning interests.

Modern educational research is always central. simSchool regularly posts newly published research studies and new sim content to help students keep current and practice concepts.

Mozilla Open Badges and Micro-certifications to help reward students for their learning & accomplishments.
HOW SIMSCHOOL IS USED

simSchool is incorporated into institutions across a wide array of uses in teaching and learning, as well as to meet local institutional goals, legal, and compliance requirements.

Because simSchool is a fully-scalable, data-rich, persistent, and flexible simulation and content authoring platform, there is no practical limit to the ways in which it can be used. Each day we learn of new and innovative ways partner institutions are finding value and meaning in simSchool experiences, including:

- A low-stakes environment for practicing strategies, instructional task design and more
- A “lab experience” aligned to course content and activity for undergraduate instruction in education in both synchronous and asynchronous situations
- A discussion and exploration environment for Masters-level students
- Research sandbox for PhD candidates
- A tool in teacher induction providing universities with a pathway to maintain dialogue with grads
- An intervention tool for teachers in praxis at risk due to poor school evaluations
- A professional development tool for graduate assistants and adjuncts
- As a supplement and direct substitute for physical field work
- As a tool for exploring and enacting research models discussed during methods courses
- As a way to meet difficult-to-address requirements for field work (state and federal)

Outcomes of using simSchool in pre-service teacher education include increased confidence in teaching, increased technology self efficacy, increased retention in education courses, increased knowledge of instructional strategies, increased knowledge of classroom management techniques, improved understanding of student learning needs and differentiation of instruction, and increased understanding of learning theory. For a sample of the published research on simSchool, refer to last page of this Higher Education overview.

10 trillion VIRTUAL STUDENTS & TASKS

simSchool’s intelligence engine can create 10 trillion unique learner profiles — more than there are K12 students on the planet. Students may literally model any student they might encounter in the field

infinite possibilities FOR PRACTICE & REFLECTION

Students and instructors may create and share any content, replay any sim classroom and revisit and download data reports any time. This enables a limitless array of learning opportunities and pathways to improvement.
HOW SIMSCHOOL WORKS

SimSchool is committed to ensuring a quality experience for all instructors and students, both on and offline.

While the SimSchool library and online tools allow any user to log in and develop their own self-paced experience, we find the greatest success comes with a guided approach that carefully considers course and institutional goals, challenges, population demographics, and concerns.

When the simulations feel “authentic” for educators, they are more engaged and satisfied and greater outcomes can be measured. SimSchool suggests a 3-step approach to usage.

1. Goal-setting
   SimSchool meets with participating instructors and/or Deans to outline instructional goals

2. Course creation
   SimSchool creates custom content and courses specifically designed to meet institutional needs
   (see details below)

3. Participant On-boarding
   SimSchool offers introductory webinars and follow ups designed to facilitate a stress-free experience for all users
   (see details below)

COSTS & BENEFITS

SimSchool access can be obtained through affordable licensing for any size organization. As firm advocates for teachers and educational technology, we constantly strive to add value while preserving quality and equity.

Individual Account
$50 per user 12-mos yr
Benefits:
• On demand access 24/7
• Email support
• Access to online tools, library, and forums
• Access to SimSchool badges and micro-certifications

Note that any user may purchase an individual account and have access to all online features with the exception of Course enrollment and management. Also, training and institutional level reporting are additional.

Institutional Package
$3,750 per 12-mos yr
Benefits:
• 75 student accounts & unlimited instructor accounts
• 2 courtesy web trainings each semester for up to 5 instructors
• 2 courtesy web on trainings each semester for up to 25 participants at each session
• On demand phone support M-F
• 3 custom-designed modules
• 1 custom-designed course
• General Institution-level reports
• 1 custom Institutional report
• Access to all online tools
• Access to SimSchool badges & micro-certifications
• 1 custom Institutional Badge

Volume Pricing
to accommodate large #s as add-on to Institutional Package
Annual rates include:
76 – 250 students $20 / student
251 - 499 students $18 / student
> 500 $15 / student

For each range of user population, all benefits of the Institutional Package apply and compound up to 500 users (i.e. 251 users = 3 custom reports, 9 modules, etc.)

Train the Trainer
$250 per educator
Benefits:
• 16 hr. live web training course to become a “certified Trainer” to help build local capacity

Research Facilitation
$2,000 per annual study
Benefits:
• Anonymized data for one set of modules for all students at the institution
• up to 3 custom data extractions and associated reports of any data contained in student records

Costs Effective May 2015 for Summer 2015 and 2015-2016 Academic Year.
For information about on-site workshops and pilot opportunities, please contact HigherEducation@SimSchool.org
“A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.”
— Henry Adams

SELECTED SIMSCHOOL RESEARCH ARTICLES

SimSchool: An Opportunity for Using Serious Gaming for Training Teachers in Rural Areas
T Tyler-Wood, M Estes, R Christensen, G Knezek, D Gibson, Rural Special Education Quarterly (2014)

Effectiveness of an Online Simulation for Teacher Education

Assessing Teaching Skills with a Mobile Simulation.

SimSchool: Research outcomes from simulated classrooms
G. Knezek, R. Christensen, T. Tyler-Wood, P. Fisser, D. Gibson
Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference 2012 (2012)

Next Generation Learning Challenge: Simulating Teaching.
David Gibson, Stacy Kruse, EDUCUSE Quarterly (2011)

simSchool: an online dynamic simulator for enhancing teacher preparation
Rhonda Christensen, Gerald Knezek, Tandra Tyler Wood, David Gibson,

Assessment of Learning with Games and Simulations
D. Gibson, D. Cheong, D. Stuit, L. Annetta, P. Nolte,
Proceedings of Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference 2009 (2009)

All articles may be found online.

simSchool continuously investigates new questions to further teacher education and development.
To join a research endeavor or partner for grant funding, please contact us.

Interested in learning more,
visit www.simschool.org
or contact us at highereducation@simschool.org