simSchool Teacher Training Platform

2015 – 2016 Professional Development

Online, On Demand, When Educators Need it Most

Quality Virtual & Hybrid Professional Development for Educators
Customized to Meet Local Needs

www.simschool.org
Today’s schools face enormous challenges. In response to an increasingly complex society and a rapidly changing, technology-based economy, schools are being asked to educate the most diverse student body in our history to higher academic standards than ever before. This task is one that cannot be “teacher-proofed” through management systems, testing mandates, or curriculum packages. At its root, achieving high levels of student understanding requires immensely skillful teaching — and schools that are organized to support teachers’ continuous learning.

— Linda Darling-Hammond

WHAT IS SIMSCHOOL™

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, Cattel Horn Carroll, structural functional and constructivist learning theory and more), simSchool provides a safe environment where 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 students are virtual, but the learning is very real.

In simSchool, educators 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. Educators 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 teacher-player. There are no scripts. There are no barriers to the types of classroom situations and learner needs that teachers can experience. There are no restrictions on how often teachers 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.

IMPACT ON STUDENT LEARNING

simSchool helps teachers better understand the factors that contribute to emotional and cognitive performance – factors that impact effective teaching and improved outcomes.

EFFECTIVE TEACHERS make all the DIFFERENCE

IMPACT ON SCHOOL CLIMATE

simSchool helps teachers improve their skill in classroom management and understanding student differences – factors that improve school climate.
simSchool provides a rich variety of learning opportunities for educators:

**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 users.

**Forums and profile-building** features encourage educators 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 administrators to guide organizational goals and to track educator 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 educators keep current.

**Mozilla Open Badges and Micro-certifications** to help reward educators for their learning & accomplishments.

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**WHAT SIMSCHOOL OFFERS**

**BY THE NUMBERS**

**simSchool’s Impact in Education**

**RETENTION**

80% at 3 years

Studies in Texas found that teachers who used simSchool in teacher education and praxis remained in education at a significantly higher rate than teachers who did not use simSchool:

50% retention at 3 yrs - vs - 80% for simSchool users

**PREDICTABLE RESULTS**

10-12 Hrs

Major shift in belief about the ability to impact every student’s learning, increase in knowledge of differentiation of instruction

4-6 Hrs

Increased understanding of classroom management & individual student needs

2 Hrs

Increased belief in the Value of Technology and Games in the Classroom

**EQUITABLE ACCESS**

Affordable, Meaningful Experiences for All

- Online & available 24/7
- Fully customizable content
- Costs significantly lower than other computer-based options
- Research validation for 10 yrs = predictable outcomes

**simSchool is**

Cloud-based and multi-platform compatible

That means no labor-intensive software installation and no hardware upgrades.
**HOW SIMSCHOOL WORKS**

simSchool is committed to ensuring a quality experience for all educators, 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 in professional development comes with a guided approach that carefully considers local educational 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 local staff to outline PD goals (i.e. help teachers practice classroom management)

2. **Course creation**
   simSchool creates a custom course or courses specifically designed to local needs (see details below)

3. **Educator 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Account</th>
<th>Institutional Package</th>
<th>Volume Pricing</th>
<th>Train the Trainer</th>
<th>Induction Facilitation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>$50 per user 12-mos yr</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,000 per 12-mos yr</strong></td>
<td><strong>to accommodate large #s as add-on to Institutional Package</strong></td>
<td><strong>$250 per educator</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,000 per school per year</strong></td>
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<td>Benefits:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• On demand access 24/7</td>
<td>• 40 educator accounts</td>
<td>• 16 hr. live web training course to become a “certified Trainer” to help build local capacity</td>
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<td>• 1-hr monthly live facilitated discussions with inductees</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Email support</td>
<td>• 1 webinar each semester for up to 25 participants</td>
<td>• up to 25 participants per session</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Access to online tools, library, and forums</td>
<td>• 3 custom-designed modules</td>
<td>• 1 custom local Badge</td>
<td>• 1 custom local Badge</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Access to simSchool badges and micro-certifications</td>
<td>• 1 custom-designed course</td>
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<td>• 1 custom local Badge</td>
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Note that any educator may purchase an individual account and have full access to all online features. However, training and institutional level reporting are additional.

Annual rates include:

- 41 – 250 users - $35 per user
- 251 – 499 - $30 per user
- more than 500 - $25 per user

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

COSTS EFFECTIVE MAY 2015 FOR SUMMER 2015 AND 2015-2016 ACADEMIC YEAR. ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS. FOR INFORMATION ABOUT ON-SITE WORKSHOPS AND PILOT OPPORTUNITIES, PLEASE CONTACT K12PD@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, EDUCAUSE Quarterly (2011)

*SimSchool: an online dynamic simulator for enhancing teacher preparation*
Rhonda Christensen, Gerald Knezeck, 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 K12PD@simschool.org