

# Quest2Teach: Digitally Bridging Educational Theory to Practice

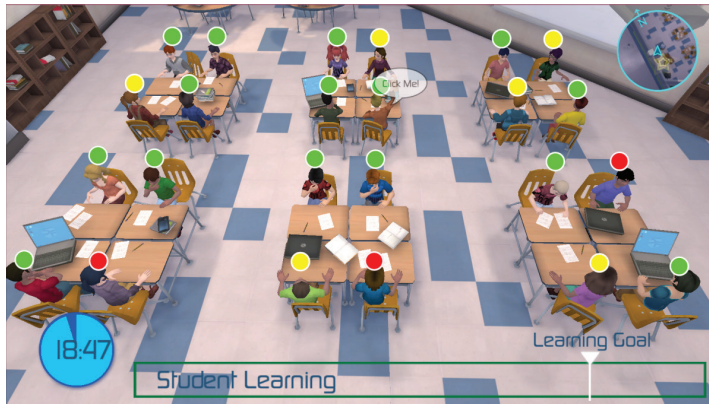
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## The Quest2Teach Program

Quest2Teach is a game-infused virtual learning environment and social-professional network designed for teacher preparation programs to bridge between students' theoretical coursework and its application into the field, as well as PD for professional educators. Pre-service students and in-service teachers evolve their professional identity in a variety of narrative-based 3D role-playing scenarios, each with a particular theoretical focus such as Writers Workshop, Student Mentoring, Data-Driven Decision Making and other standards-based skills, guided by their instructor or facilitator, and embedded within a larger experience-based and game-based curricula. In these immersive worlds, players create their professional avatar (which they evolve over several semesters), play out roles, solve contextualized authentic problems, fail safely, see the impact of their individual decisions and trajectories, while gaining experience and fluency in these theories-in-action. Game meters and other in-game analytics are fed back into a real-world professional network, leveraging gamified achievement layers to validate and extend their digital experiences into their real lives, via this network of supportive network colleagues. Here, game achievements are translated into a social currency that is used to validate other players as they reflect, craft, and evolve their impact stories of how they are translating core learning concepts to the real world. In this way, we are leveraging bounded learning experiences and gamified achievement layers to achieve real-world professional growth and impact.





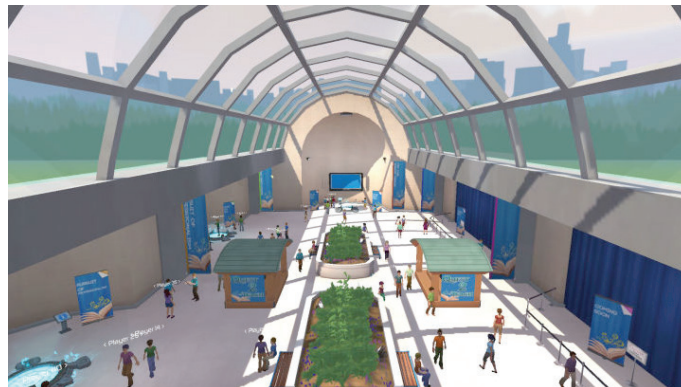
## Our small 'g' games

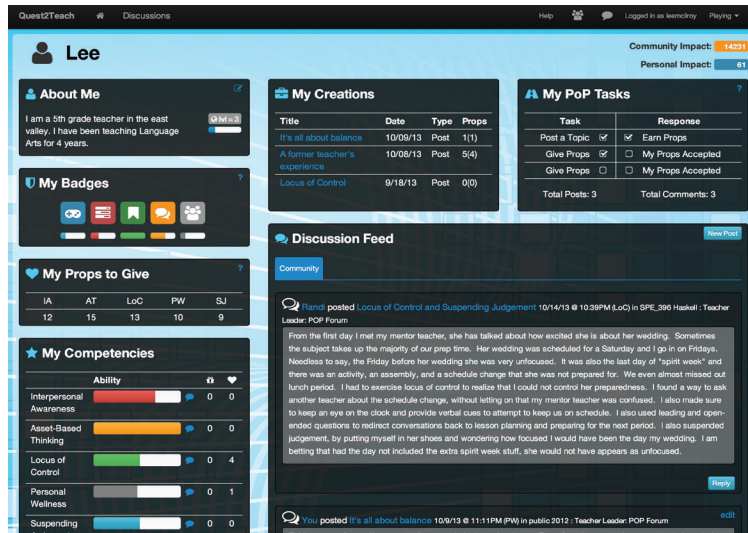
While only in its 2<sup>nd</sup> year and growing, Quest2Teach currently offers a suite of four 'small 'g' games' currently being used in courses at our Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College and other universities in our Q2T network. Small 'g' games are bounded and completable (in 3-4 hours) and what our teachers would call our 'video games'. The titles and subjects are listed below, and all are ready to scale to interested:

- **Pursuit of Professionalism** (Communications, leadership, interpersonal dynamics, and professionalism skills)
- **On the Write Track** (Student conferencing and mentoring in literacy and new media literacies)
- **Diving into Data** (Using data-driven decision making (from multiple sources, not just assessment) to inform educational practice and continually increase impact)
- **Project Based Approaches: At the Core** (Creating and implementing project-based unit plans to actively engage students)

## Our big 'G' game

More important than any individual game title, is our big 'G' infrastructure, which is open-ended; a socio-professional network integrating small 'g' games into a larger infrastructure with student driven extensions, teacher smart-tools and modding, affinity spaces, a 3D multi-player hub, and a professional identity that evolves over semesters from in-game analytics, reflections, and real-world experiences. This network also links together multiple teachers colleges for collaboration across campuses and internationally with Q2T sister sites in Ireland, Italy, and Denmark.





## Impact

Founded in a design-based research program, Q2T is theory-based and has been extensively studied and iterated over the past 4 semesters of classroom implementations with hundreds of pre-service teachers. Each study has resulted in significant learning and engagement gains, moreover, comparison studies and ethnographic methods show compelling results. Q2T students report shifting into a protagonist and active role in their learning, describing the 'skills they've gained', rather than the 'information they learned about'. There is also an interesting shift in their self-reported identity from that of a 'student' to a 'teacher' as they see themselves successfully engaging in these professional practices with their avatars as extensions of themselves. Students report higher levels of confidence in their teaching, having gained this virtual practice, and frequently voice appreciation of the ability to fail safely and try new approaches. Players also show stronger fluency in the language of education, including *how* to better engage with students, after experiencing these discourse nuances on a personal level with multiple linguistic models from which to choose.

## Conclusion

In sum, these games and their extensions place the student as protagonist in an immersive classroom narrative, with scaffolded language and experiences, able to make authentic decisions, see their consequences played out, and gain fluency in those practices. The network infrastructure helps bridge these virtual experiences into the real world through reflection, extensions, transfer, and community, allowing students to craft and evolve their professional identity and impact over their entire Teachers College experience and their professional career.

## Additional resources about Quest2Teach

Please visit the Q2T website to learn more about this program, as well as watch videos, and request a guest account to play through these games. [www.quest2teach.org](http://www.quest2teach.org)

