

West Virginia Center for Professional Development Partners with World Wide Workshop to Help Educators and Students Gain 21st Century Learning, Life and Technology Skills

Contact: Christy Day, 304-558-0539

Charleston, W.Va. - Students in West Virginia are taking a quantum leap from computer *gamers* to computer game *creators*, and from computer *users* to computer *programmers*. A program called Globaloria is equipping state students with the skills to create their own Flash-based computer games about core educational topics and social issues. In the process, they learn deep understanding about the subjects they present in their game, and they gain valuable technology knowledge, creative thinking and project-management skills that will help them succeed in life.

The Globaloria program is a social-media technology innovation of the World Wide Workshop, a NYC-based foundation that partnered with the Governor's Office, the Claude W. Benedum Foundation, Verizon West Virginia, and the West Virginia Center for Professional Development to create new educational opportunities for West Virginia. It offers a unique learning opportunity to students, ages 13 and older, who use the most advanced Web2.0 technology and a state-wide learning network as they learn how to build educational web-games and simulations. As members of this 'virtual learning community' students and educators across the state can connect with each other, and with technology and game design experts from the World Wide Workshop who can help them build their games.

This is the second year for the Globaloria program in West Virginia. Due to the success of the first year pilot, the Benedum Foundation, Verizon-WV and the state increased funding to allow Globaloria to expand from 8 to 15 diverse schools, reaching more than 160 students during the 2008-2009 academic year, lead by 35 educators and administrators.

The Globaloria Academy will be held at Bridgeport Middle School in conjunction with WVCPD's Governor's Academy for Teaching Excellence (GATE). Participants will undergo intensive professional development during the Academy, and will learn best practices for leading successful programs at their schools. Also a part of the Academy, **first year students and educators will present their games and share their Globaloria experiences with program newcomers and members of the media at 10:00 a.m., July 16, 2008.**

Globaloria was created by the World Wide Workshop Foundation, an organization that engages with forward-thinking leaders, corporations, school systems, non-profits and research centers to enrich existing educational strategies with the latest technology and innovative learning opportunities. The World Wide Workshop was founded by Idit Caperton, Ph.D., an award-winning MIT scientist, author and Internet-industry entrepreneur. Foundation programs are designed to support the needs of economically-disadvantaged and technologically-underserved communities in the US and worldwide. The educational games that students develop on the Globaloria network not only address core knowledge and skills, but also social and economic issues they witness in their local schools and in their state or global communities.

“The students in West Virginia have shown such promise and talent in their learning projects, and everyone who has witnessed their progress last year is truly impressed,” said Dr. Caperton. “This program involves hard work by students and teachers. We’ve seen how students work really well with their teachers, and how they learn together, step-by-step, to take full advantage of the technology and resources that are available to help them as they design and produce their interactive games,” she explained. “They also learn to interact with experts on the network who inspire and support their creative work virtually. The learning outcomes of the past year are spectacular. We know the program will continue to grow, not only in West Virginia, but also in other locations throughout the nation and the world,” said Dr. Caperton.

In the Globaloria networks, students and educators learn together using wikis, blogs, an open-source curriculum filled with game-building assignments, tutorials, and game templates. Participants also have direct access to game design and production experts from the World Wide Workshop, who help them work through Flash programming challenges and production management issues for their games. The experts post tips and answer questions on the wikis and hold regular web conferences with students.

“This program exemplifies the kind of teaching and learning that equips students with the skills they will need in the emerging workforce,” said Dr. Patricia S. Kusimo, CEO of the Center for Professional Development. “What Globaloria does is to force students to be advanced thinkers, problem solvers, and creators in an onsite and virtual team environment. This kind of experience is extremely valuable,” she continued.

WVCPD and the World Wide Workshop teams are looking to expand the program to include additional sites in the spring and fall of 2009. Interested schools are required to apply online for the program. For more information about Globaloria visit www.WorldWideWorkshop.org and www.MyGLife.org/usa/wv, or email: Lee@WorldWideWorkshop.org.

For details about the Globaloria Academy and July 16th presentations, contact Christy Day at 304-558-0539 or via Blackberry at 304-389-6766.