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Education-Gaming Professionals Call for Bolder Vision

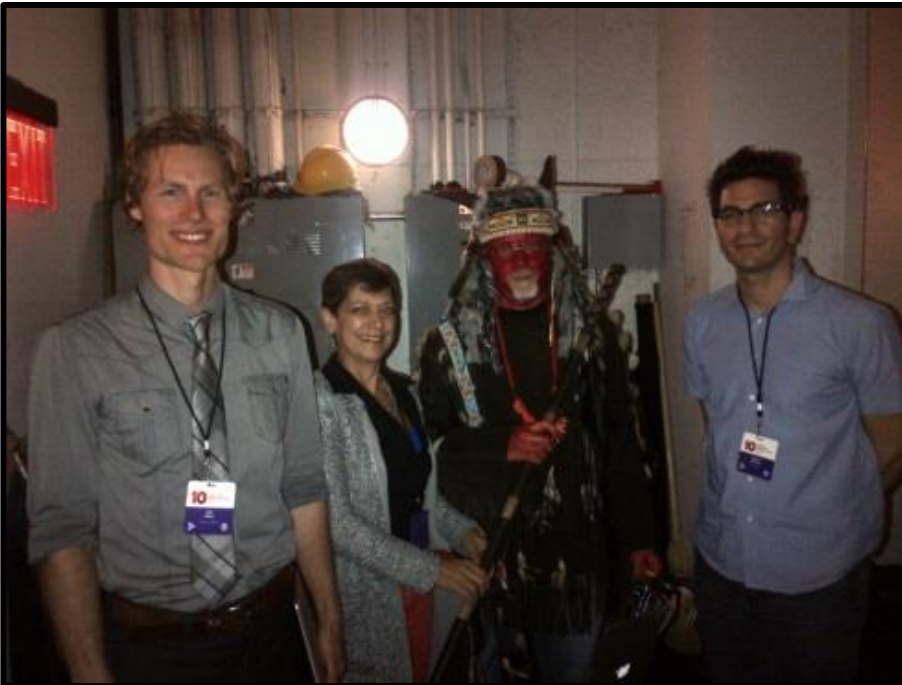
Games in the Classroom Have Accomplished a Limited Mission, But the Future is Bright

New York, NY – On Monday, June 17, 2013, leading thinkers in educational game design for learning convened at New World Stages for the [Games for Change Festival](#), a three-day conference focused on creating and using digital games for meaningful civic learning and social change. It is the largest gaming event in New York City and brings together leading game designers, academics, funders, NGOs, corporations, government agencies and educators seeking to leverage entertainment and engagement for social good to discuss and demo games for change.

This year's 10th anniversary conference featured a panel to change the conversation around game-based learning: [Gamifying Schools and Schoolifying Games: The Art, The Science, and The Myth](#). Dr. Idit Harel Caperton of World Wide Workshop, Dan White of Filament Games, Andrew Gardner of BrainPOP, and Dr. James Bower of Numedeon challenged educational game-makers to harness the potential of gaming technology, psychology, and pedagogy in the classroom.

Andrew Gardner, [BrainPOP](#)'s Senior Manager of Educators, critiqued the misunderstanding of gamification as an end goal. He encouraged valuing the teacher-student relationship in education and coupling a new term with "gamification": "producify." This suggests game-based learning should help students become producers of their learning, not just exhibitors, and is essential to achieving the promise of game-based learning.

"Gamification without producification is educational tyranny," said Gardner. **Dan White**, CEO of [Filament Games](#), a production studio for learning games, opposed the use of digital games as data-collection vehicles in schools. Currently providing an oversimplified performance snapshot, game-based learning presents an opportunity to assess student performance through gameplay, which is ground for richer, more complex and



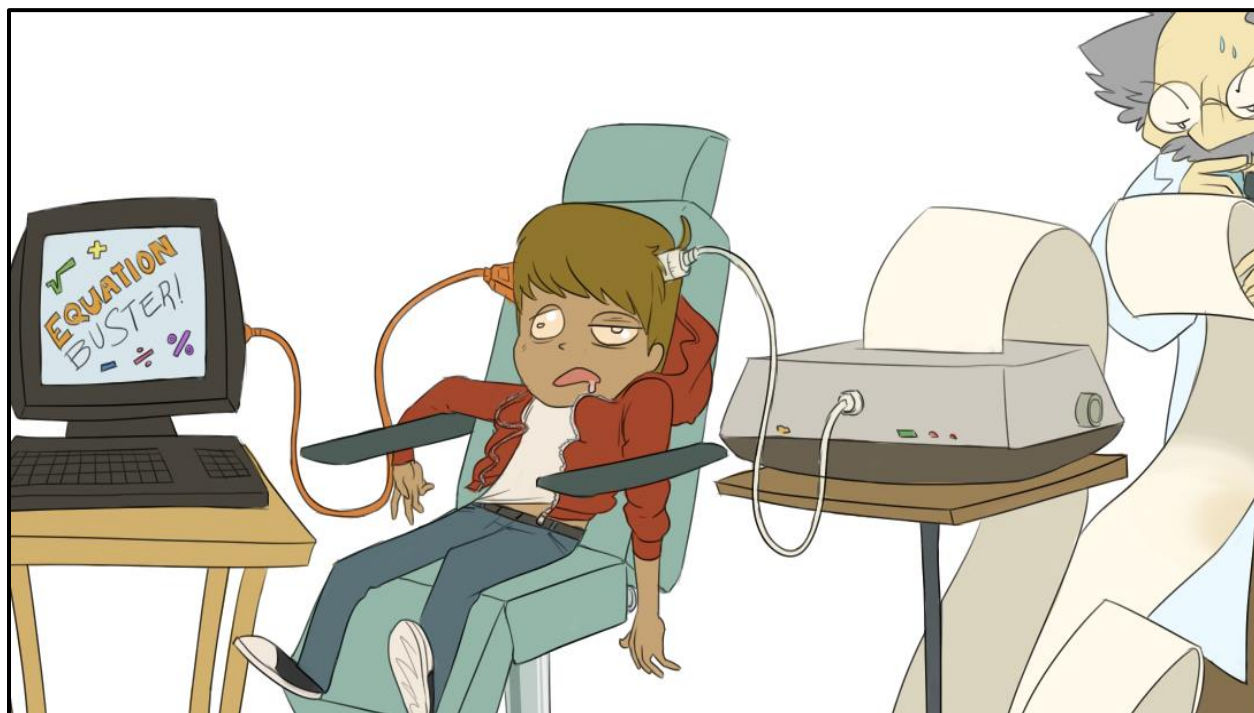
more nuanced assessment. Until game developers create products that capitalize on this, White says, "Let's let the assessments be the assessments, and the games be the games."

Dr. James M. Bower founder and Chief Visionary Officer of Numedeon, creators of [Whyville.net](#), dressed as Black Elk (a Lakota Sioux visionary), used a Native American reference to "Ghost Shirts"--false protection against change--to tear down the inclination of game developers and educators alike to incorporate games in the classroom to support status quo education. Bower called for creating games that encourage youth to forge their own learning and connect in new ways.

Left to Right: White, Harel-Caperton, Bower, & Gardner backstage before their session; Bower costumed as Black Elk.

Dr. Idit Harel Caperton, founder and president of [World Wide Workshop](#) and [Globaloria](#), curated and moderated the session and posed a general critique of current edu-gamification initiatives. She ranted, “Games being used in schools thus far are mostly to engage students in school-ish content, real-time assessment for teachers, tracking student progress, and test prep.” Idit believes that game-based learning has the potential to stir youth to be more engaged and innovative, and to learn to care deeply about social issues. “Playing *and* making games in the classroom could be the best tool yet to align with the Games for Change philosophy and grand mission. Yet very few programs do so,” she claimed. She highlighted Globaloria as an example of a complex and challenging learning environment that tasks youth with playing, researching and producing games on social issues of importance to them and their communities. [Research](#) shows that students and teachers crave this rich form of games-for-change learning.

Game developers and educators worldwide can expect to hear more from these provocative thinkers as game-based learning becomes established in the changing landscape of schools and education.



“Playing games involves complex interactions that are hard to measure and interpret. It’s easy to get overly reductionist, and it’s easy to draw the wrong conclusions. Developers should not simplify their games in order to make data cleaner assessment vehicles that deliver declarative statements about player performance, thus clipping their wings,” (Dan White, Filament Games).

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World Wide Workshop (www.WorldWideWorkshop.org) is a nonprofit organization that invents social media and digital technology applications to help youth and educators participate as leaders in the global knowledge economy. The company’s approach to making and playing educational games was recently featured in [EdSurge](#), [Education Week](#), [Getting Smart](#), and [Huffington Post](#). **Globaloria** is the first and largest social learning network for developing STEM knowledge and global citizenship skills through game design and coding. Launched in 2006, the results-proven Globaloria is at work today in middle- and high-school classrooms and community centers in California, New York, Texas, West Virginia, and soon, Wyoming. Globaloria students have won national recognition for their work, including National Medals in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards two years running, 2012 Central Texas NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing Runner-Up, and Aspire IT Middle School Outreach Program Pilot Fund Grant Winner. To play students’ games and learn about how Globaloria classrooms nationwide motivate students to make games for change, go to www.globaloria.org.