

# **SOCIAL STUDIES** **DISTANCE-LEARNING** **RESOURCES** **2020-2021**

**EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY**  
**RESOURCES THAT ARE**  
**READY NOW**

**FOR USE IN-CLASS OR FOR REMOTE**  
**TEACHING AND LEARNING OF**  
**SOCIAL STUDIES**



**Social Studies**  
**Innovation Network**

[SocialStudiesInnovation.org](https://SocialStudiesInnovation.org)

# Social Studies

## INNOVATION NETWORK

This guide is meant to help teachers find innovative content to teach social studies in their K-12 classrooms, whether for in-class or remote teaching and learning. Nearly all of these programs are backed by research demonstrating their feasibility for implementation and promise for supporting student learning. They were funded by the American people through federal grants. We hope these distance-learning teaching and learning resources will help teachers discover innovative and effective ways to teach core social studies principles in our challenging era.



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# Center for Civic Education

Calabasas, CA



## Center for Civic Education

### *Promoting the Principles of Democracy*

Website: <https://learn.civiced.org/>

**Intervention:** [Learn.civiced.org](https://learn.civiced.org) is a web-based professional development resource for teachers interested in deepening their understanding about American constitutional government. This online platform features free, self-paced online courses, links to teaching resources, and a national discussion forum to connect with civic education experts and other teachers across the country.

The courses feature video interviews of noted scholars accompanied by online exercises to reinforce learning. The [We the People Open Course](#) takes learners on a journey from the philosophical foundations of the U.S. Constitution to the modern interpretation and application of its ideals. [Strengthening Democracy in America](#) is a collection of free courses examining contemporary challenges to American constitutional democracy. These courses deepen understanding of the American political system and rights and responsibilities within it.



**Research Base:** Learn.civiced.org was created as a part of the James Madison Legacy Project (JMLP). The project aimed to expand the availability and cost-effectiveness of professional development that increases teacher capacity to promote high-need and other students' attainment of state standards in civics and government. JMLP provided professional development in the Center's We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution curriculum, which has reached more than 28 million students and 75,000 teachers in all fifty states since 1987. This professional development involved 2,219 teachers serving over 255,000 students in more than 1,200 participating schools with significant concentrations of high-need students. [National studies of JMLP](#) (2015–2018) demonstrated that students receiving the intervention showed statistically significant increases in civic knowledge compared to control-group students. Research on 12,253 middle school students found that the improvement in civic knowledge scores of the JMLP students was 12% greater than that of students in the control group. A study of 13,568 high school students indicated that the knowledge gain of the JMLP students was 15% greater than that of students in the control group.



**How to Access Learn.civiced.org:** Teachers and other lifelong learners can register for the platform for free by visiting [Learn.civiced.org](https://learn.civiced.org). The platform is web-based and works on nearly any device.

**Government Awards Supporting R&D:** Learn.civiced.org was supported by JMLP, a nationwide initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Education through a Supporting Effective Educator Development grant.

# Center on Representative Government

Bloomington, IN

Website: <https://corg.iu.edu>,  
<https://engagingcongress.org/>



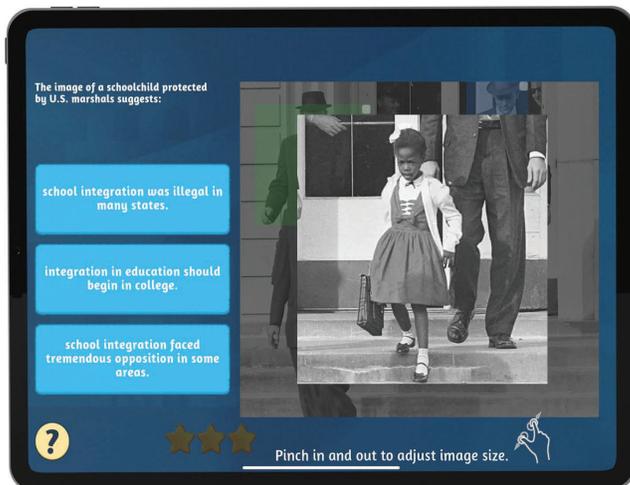
**Intervention:** *Engaging Congress* is a free interactive civics game that uses primary sources from the Library of Congress to explore how representative government works. The interactive is packed with carefully curated photographs, documents, maps and political cartoons from the Library's collection that have been

placed into thematic stories. Each story contains a content video, minigame, multiple assessment questions, and a primary source exploration tool that supports critical thinking skills through inquiry. Students are encouraged to use constructive play to zoom in and move around each primary source and answer inquiry-based questions based on their critical analysis of the item. Additionally, minigames allow students to sequence events, build and evaluate a federal budget, draw their own voting districts, or challenge each other through trivia challenges.



**Research-Based Development:** Engaging Congress was developed with [Half Full Nelson](#), an award winning

media company specializing in game based learning. They have worked with educational research teams on projects for Indiana University, The University of Mississippi, and Harvard. The pilot for Engaging Congress utilized a mixed method approach with the primary method being a questionnaire supplemented with data collection from user observations, student reflections, group discussion and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire method was selected as the primary form of evaluation because it offered the greatest opportunity to gather a robust amount of information in a short period of time. Nineteen classes representing 417 students across three states and four geographical characteristics were included in the pilot. We have an ongoing relationship with the Education Development Center at the University of Michigan to gather data from teachers about their use of Engaging Congress.



**American Association of School Librarians:** Engaging Congress was recognized by AASL in 2018 as a "Best App for Teaching and Learning."

**How to Access the Center's Products:** *Engaging Congress* and the Center's other apps are available at no cost for iPads, Tablets, and computers (including Chromebooks). Additionally, the Center's website contains links to other free interactive resources. Web-based play is accessed at <https://engagingcongress.org/>.

**Government and Private Awards Supporting Engaging Congress:** The Center on Representative Government and Half Full Nelson have received yearly grants since FY15 from organizations such as the Library of Congress and the Anderson Foundation for the development and dissemination of Engaging Congress.

# Civics! An American Musical

Boston, MA

***Game-based approach to civic engagement, primary source analysis, and learning U.S. history***

Website: [fablevisiongames.com/civics](http://fablevisiongames.com/civics)



FABLEVISION

GAAMES

**Intervention:** Inspired by *Hamilton*, *Civics! An American Musical* is a free, interactive game that brings inquiry-based learning center stage. Students analyze primary sources from the Library of Congress integrated into a musical production.

*Civics!* is a web-based role-playing game (RPG) for middle schoolers that can be used in-classroom or in distance-learning settings. The game is aligned to the C3 Framework and Common Core Standards, and lets students develop an understanding of history and civics from a variety of perspectives, including through a modern lens. *Civics!* can be used as an engagement activity, or to reinforce prior learning about primary sources and American social studies topics. Mechanics help players become familiar with the inquiry process as they observe, reflect, and question primary sources from the Library of Congress' archives. Students explore four historical topics: school desegregation, the creation of the National Parks, the establishment of the FDA, and the Chinese Exclusion Act ([Game Trailer](#)). The game was created in partnership with FableVision, Maryland Public Television, Maryland Humanities, and Tufts' Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at the Tisch College of Civic Life. The associated Teacher Guide and Professional Development is available on [FableVision Games](#).



**Research Base:** *Civics!* launched for the 2020 academic school year. Classroom tests will be conducted in two Maryland middle schools during the 2020- 2021 school year, working with two middle-grades teachers and

their several classes, and will focus on feasibility and student comprehension. Results from the study will be incorporated into improvements in the game, teacher support materials, and in promising avenues for teacher outreach. The developer behind *Civics!*, FableVision Studios, has been creating educational games and media since its founding in 1996. The company has developed numerous research-based, federally-funded projects, including videos, websites, interactives, and games.

**How to Access *Civics! An American Musical* and more FableVision Games products:** *Civics!* is



available on Windows, Mac, iOS, and Android devices. There are other research-based learning games and PD resources available at [www.fablevisiongames.com](http://www.fablevisiongames.com).

**Government Awards Supporting R&D:** *Civics! An American Musical* was created through the Library of Congress' Teaching with Primary Sources program.

# Chef Koochooloo Mountain View, CA

## Interactive cooking app teaching STEAM content

Website: <https://www.chefkoochooloo.com>



**Intervention:** [Chef Koochooloo](https://www.chefkoochooloo.com) is a platform that teaches kids Social Responsibility, Global Competency, and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) through cooking healthy international recipes via dynamic educational apps, interactive services, and an engaging curriculum.

Our enrichment program for K-5 students blends humanity's oldest means of socialization—cooking and eating together—with its most modern academic lessons. Socially sensitive, relevant, and aligned with Common Core, New Generation Science Standards (NGSS), NCSS, IB and ELL standards, the student embarks on a delicious scientific culinary journey, discovering new countries, cultures, and people.



The app hosts a variety of recipes, STEAM domain content, lesson plans, and kitchen science experiments, developed for young students and validated by experts ([See demo video](#)). The intervention can be used for in-class, remote, home, enrichment, or hybrid teaching and learning environments for elementary school students.

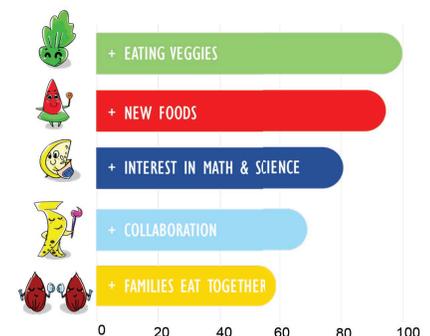
Chef Koochooloo game mechanics introduce learners to different countries, math, science, and social scientific concepts through the vehicle of international recipe walkthroughs. The game starts when a teacher assigns a recipe or when a learner picks a country-specific recipe to explore and relevant people, facts, and concepts get introduced to the user with a robust set of assessment questions and critical thinking questions at the tail end of each lesson. There are also nutritional and health-oriented items and minigames sprinkled throughout the lessons. There is a teacher dashboard

being developed now that keeps track of student progress and standards-aligned assessment, with a thorough in-app onboarding introduction that starts when teachers and learners first download the app. We are always looking for feedback from educators so let us know if you can help: ([layla@chefkoochooloo.com](mailto:layla@chefkoochooloo.com))

**Research Base:** A preliminary pilot study with 259 students at 11 elementary schools in California showed statistically significant increases in student knowledge of math, science, geography, and English language arts. Survey results demonstrated that parents of K-5 students who used the app ( $n = 1000$ ) reported that their students became more interested in STEM subjects, healthy cooking, and trying new foods.

**How to Access Chef Koochooloo:** The free educational game is available on iPads and Android tablets.

**Government Awards Supporting R&D:** Chef Koochooloo is supported by the National Science Foundation Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Phase I and Phase II grants.





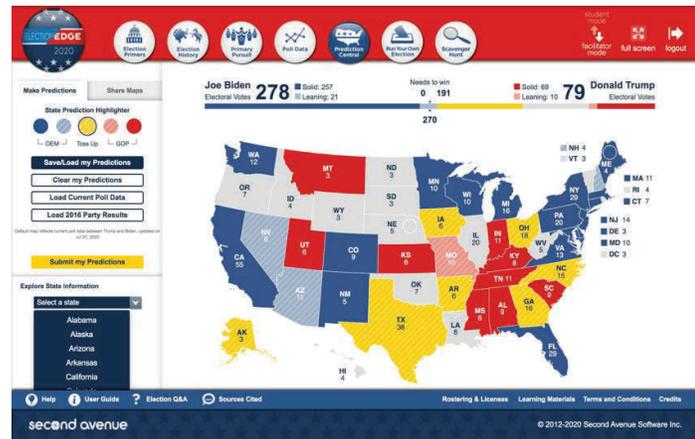
## Election Edge

by Second Avenue Learning

Rochester, NY

Website: <https://secondavenuelearning.com/election-edge/>

**Intervention:** Election Edge aims to take the mystery and complexity out of the United States Presidential election process. With a range of different interactive activities, Election Edge encourages students to reason, analyze and participate in the electoral process as illustrated in Election Edge's [introductory video](#).



By providing the tools and information necessary, teachers can tackle tricky topics such as the Electoral College and the Primary system without partisan political agendas. Now more than ever, it is imperative for students to understand and participate in civics. Our award-winning Election Edge program combines various activities and supplemental [lesson plans](#) that meet NCSS and Common Core standards for middle school curricula to AP level curricula. Election Edge brings the Presidential election system to life right in your classroom and is also easily integrated into a virtual classroom!

**Interactive Features:** Election Edge allows students to time travel through history while exploring US Election History. In Election History, students view historically accurate data from every U.S. presidential election dating back to the first election in 1789. In Primary Pursuit, students track progress as candidates seek nomination. In Prediction Central, students can make predictions on the upcoming election. The Scavenger Hunt feature aims to spark curiosity in students and motivate them to think critically on exploratory scavenger hunt questions. The teacher's ability to check students' answers allows them to assess where students may need reinforcement in their learning. Our features incorporate accurate up-to-date data on previous and current elections so students can have evidence-based discussions about American civics. Studies show that students with strong civics foundations are more career-ready and have higher completion rates. Election Edge provides teachers with the tools to teach, test and build confidence in their students.

**Industry Awards:** [Serious Games Showcase & Challenge 2018 Finalist](#); [EdTech Awards Cool Tool Winner 2018](#); iStudy Shortlisted Guide 2018/19.

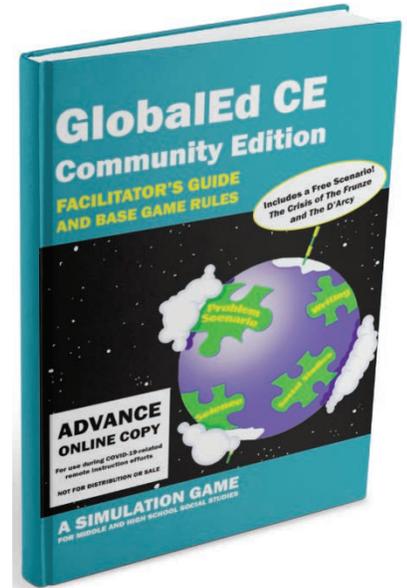
**How to Access Election Edge:** Election Edge is available on all devices with internet access via the [Second Avenue Learning website](#). Election Edge is free for teachers. You can access your free account [here](#).

## Roleplaying Simulation Game for Rich Socio-Scientific Exploration

Website: <https://sim.globaled2.com>

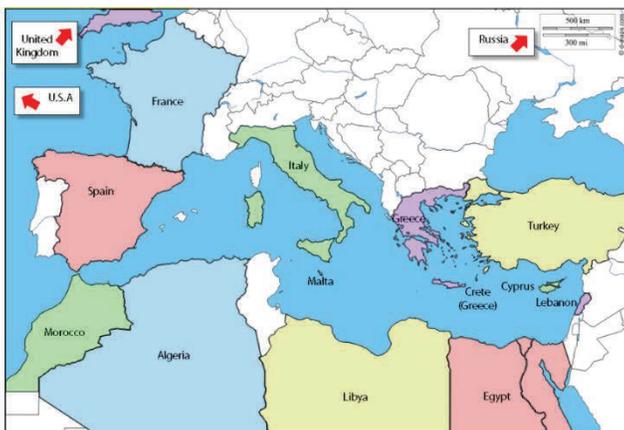
**Intervention:** GlobalEd Community Edition (CE) is a simulation game where students roleplay as delegates to an international crisis summit to solve a real-world, socio-scientific problem. Games can be conducted entirely virtually with existing classroom technologies.

GlobalEd CE can be used with middle to high school social studies classes in face-to-face, fully virtual, or hybrid/blended environments. Simulations can last between 1 day and 1 month, depending on teachers' goals. The game's mechanics require students to deeply explore and debate real-world challenges and crises presented in problem scenarios. Students research the complexities of the social studies and scientific issues presented in the game scenario and develop evidence-based arguments in a way that introduces students to complex social studies content and social studies thinking and analytic skills. Students work in teams of countries at the summit to develop proposals to the scenario problem. The winner is the team that receives the most votes at the end of the simulation. The *Facilitator's Guide and Base Game Rules* are downloadable at the *GlobalEd Community Edition* website: <https://sim.globaled2.com/teachers>.



**Research Base:** The GlobalEd family of simulations is based on over two decades of scientific research and refinement of the simulation. Although the downloadable *Community Edition (CE)* of this game has not been a part of any specific scientific study, it was based on and refines the multi-classroom version *GlobalEd2*, which has been a part of numerous studies. In the previous edition *GlobalEd2*, a large-scale study on its effectiveness (n = 1600 students, 36 teachers) yielded significant results in student achievement and growth of

socio-scientific literacy skills, writing, inquiry skills, and science and social studies content knowledge. In addition, previous editions of *GlobalEd* have repeatedly demonstrated substantial increases in students' self-efficacy and interest in socio-scientific issues and content, including increased interest in pursuing scientific careers as a result of seeing the social contexts of complex technological and global challenges (Lawless et al., 2018). Furthermore, formal studies on *GlobalEd*'s effectiveness demonstrated higher results for students in urban and under-resourced classrooms in comparison to that of suburban classrooms (Lawless et al., 2018). More information on the research base can be found at [www.globaled2.com/research](http://www.globaled2.com/research).



**How to Access GlobalEd CE:** *GlobalEd CE* does not have a specific app to play the game – it can be implemented with existing classroom technologies, including implementing the game fully virtually. The *Facilitator's Manual and Base Game Rules* (downloadable at <https://sim.globaled2.com/teachers>) provide suggestions for which technologies to use with you class to play the simulation.

**Government Awards Supporting R&D:** The *GlobalEd* project has been supported by multiple grants from the Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education since 2000.

# Historic Hudson Valley

Pocantico Hills, New York

## *Resources for Teaching Slavery in Today's Classroom*

Website: <https://peoplenotproperty.hudsonvalley.org/teacher-resources>

**Intervention:** [Historic Hudson Valley](#) is a not-for-profit education organization in Westchester County, New York. Through school and public programs at its historic sites and online, Historic Hudson Valley illuminates the history of Northern slavery, provides meaningful context for its legacy today, and helps teachers share this important story with accuracy and sensitivity.

### **People Not Property: Stories of Slavery in the Colonial North**

This interactive [documentary](#) provides an extensive look at Northern slavery through stories of the enslaved. Its modular format, supported by a range of empathy-building multimedia approaches and navigation [tools](#), is tailor-made for use in school, virtual, or hybrid learning settings.

### **Runaway: Short Film and Supporting Curriculum**

In this dramatic 25-minute [film](#), set in 1740s New York, an enslaved woman named Sue assists two men who are fugitives from enslavement while she tries to prevent her young daughter from being sold. The film can be viewed in one class period and the supporting [curriculum](#) can be used in-class or online.

### **2021 Landmarks Workshop for K-12 Educators**

This workshop offers participants the opportunity to learn about the history and legacy of American slavery from leading scholars while visiting historic sites in the Hudson River Valley. Full details are available on the [Landmarks website](#).

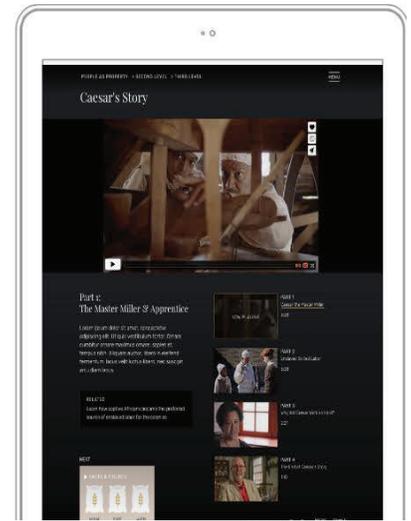
**Research Base:** HHV's resources, founded on primary documents, are developed in consultation with leading scholars and receive rigorous audience testing. *People Not Property* was funded by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Their support allowed for original research, scholar engagement and two rounds of user testing over four years. *Runaway* was produced with support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the *Runaway* curriculum was developed in consultation with faculty from Columbia Teachers College. Historic Hudson Valley has offered two previous NEH Teachers Institutes on teaching Northern Slavery, serving approximately 75 teachers from across the United States. All projects are developed with the support of HHV's long-standing African American Advisory Board.

**Industry Awards:** Winner, [2020 Webby Award for Education](#) for *People Not Property*.

**How to Access HHV's Products:** All resources are available through the [Teacher Resources portal](#) on [People Not Property](#) and can be accessed via computer, tablet or smartphone.

**Government Awards Supporting R&D:** Historic Hudson Valley's suite of resources for teaching slavery in the Colonial North has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the New York State Council on the Arts, and Westchester County Government.

# Historic Hudson Valley



**iCivics** Cambridge, MA

*Free games and curriculum to reimagine civic learning*

Website: [www.icivics.org](http://www.icivics.org)



**Intervention:** iCivics engages students in meaningful civic learning. We provide teachers well-written, inventive, and free resources – including digital games – that enhance their practice and inspire their classrooms.

iCivics is popular with students because it's fun. But teachers adopt iCivics because our free digital resources are effective, standards-aligned, and easily adaptable for the K-12 classroom, whether physical, virtual, or hybrid.

Surveyed about the impacts iCivics resources have made in their classrooms, teachers note that their students are demonstrably more engaged; more interested in politics and current events, and more knowledgeable about how our government works. And their feedback echoes research findings that students who receive high-quality civic education are more likely to be informed and actively engaged citizens and voters.



iCivics offers 20 digital games, 18 WebQuests, 7 DBQuests, a 10-step action civics unit, and over 140 lesson plans. Our games are the centerpiece of a comprehensive digital platform. They transform abstract concepts into real-life problems. Young people learn how government works by experiencing it. They step into the role of a judge, a member of Congress, a community activist, even the President of the United States – and do the job they do. The learning experience is challenging and fun. Students learn without even realizing it! All resources can be accessed and assigned from our Teach Hub at [www.icivics.org/teachers](http://www.icivics.org/teachers).

**Research Base:** iCivics is consistently validated by good evidence. Independent research confirms our resources produce clear and tangible benefits to students – even after controlling for gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. More promising: over half the students that play our games in school play them again at home on their own time. Our materials improve students' civic knowledge, civic attitudes, and core literacy skills. Students are challenged to learn and engage with the material, and have fun in the process. A Baylor University [study](#) indicated a statistically significant 19% mean increase in test scores from pretest to posttest scores across students in grades 4-11 after playing iCivics games.



iCivics is now the largest provider of civics curriculum in the nation, reaching over 120,000K and 7.5M students, in all 50 states. Our games have been played over 120K times. For more information on the research supporting our games, see [www.icivics.org/our-impact](http://www.icivics.org/our-impact).

**Industry Awards for Innovation:** Winner, [2015 MacArthur Award](#)

for Creative and Effective Institutions (MACEI); 2017 Fast Company Top 10 Most Innovative Education Companies; 2017 DVF People's Choice Award; 5-Star Common Sense Media Ranking.

**How to Access iCivics' Products:** iCivics' games are available as apps for free download on iPads, Tablets, and Chromebooks, as well as for browser play at [www.icivics.org](http://www.icivics.org).

**Government Awards:** iCivics has been supported by grants from the Library of Congress (2015, 2018, 2019) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (2018).

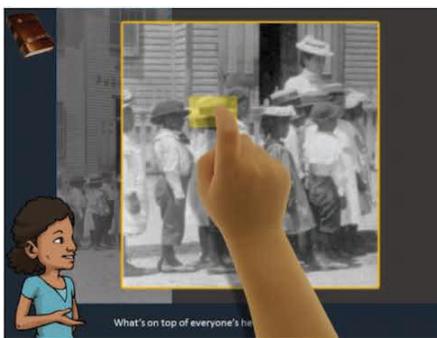
# KidCitizen

*Digital interactive for K-5 learners to promote historical inquiry and civic engagement by investigating primary sources*

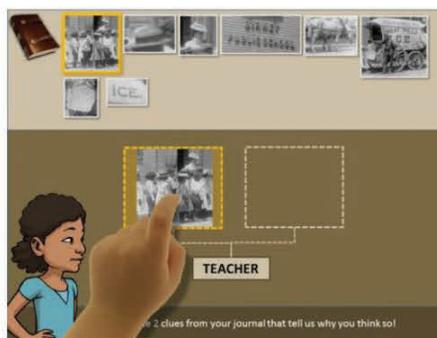
Website: <https://www.kidcitizen.net>

# KidCitizen

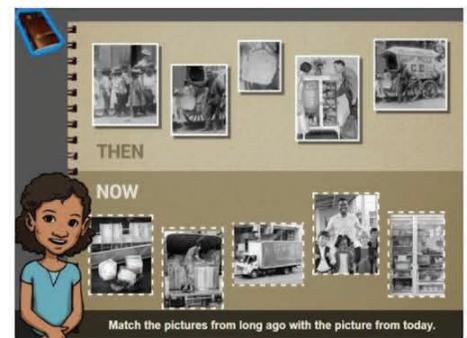
**Intervention:** KidCitizen episodes capitalize on the active and social nature of young children's learning. They use primary sources for rich demonstrations, interactions, and models of literacy in the course of innovative hands-on activities that make academic content meaningful, build on prior experiences, and foster visual literacy and historical inquiry. Each KidCitizen episode draws on a set of primary source photographs from the Library of Congress. KidCitizen was created by an interdisciplinary team of historians, educators, child development specialists, & game designers.



**SEE:** With a mentor character, children investigate images in detail using age appropriate techniques and scaffolding. They **zoom in, find, collect, and match** image elements.



**THINK:** While investigating, students collect evidence from images in their journal, then use that to think about what they are seeing – what is happening, and why?



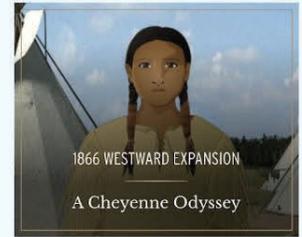
**WONDER:** Students use their journal to **construct** posters, timelines, or other outputs to wonder about connections between what they have found and their own lives.

**Research Base:** KidCitizen is based on classroom implementation experiences and research on visible thinking strategies, child development, social studies pedagogy, and game design for young children. KidCitizen has been used in elementary classrooms throughout the United States. Researchers have conducted several pilot studies to evaluate the usability and feasibility of implementation and the promise of KidCitizen to improve learning. In an observational study with kindergarteners, children demonstrated high levels of interest, engagement, and excitement for use of the digital interactive. Young learners gradually expanded their intentional observation skills, and their skills became more complex with increasingly detailed observations that served as the evidence-base for inferences, interpretations, and opinions. KidCitizen provided opportunities for multiple interpretations with several equally plausible meanings, and learners countered their own first impressions, revising their ideas as new information expanded or clarified their thinking. Initial research suggests that engaging children in the process of carefully looking, thinking, and supporting their ideas offers promising outcomes in promoting children's interest in historical inquiry and motivated them to seek additional information from other sources.

**How to Access KidCitizen:** At [www.kidcitizen.net](http://www.kidcitizen.net), you can find the KidCitizen episodes, teacher's guides, and the KidCitizen Editor. KidCitizen episodes run on PCs, Macs, Chromebooks, and iOS and Android mobile devices. Access to the episodes is free.

**Government Awards Supporting R&D:** KidCitizen is part of the Congress, Civic Participation, and Primary Sources Project, funded by a grant from the Library of Congress (2015-Present).

**Intervention:** *Mission US* engages young people in the study of transformational moments in American history. Each mission consists of an interactive narrative game and curriculum materials aligned to national standards. The [games](#) immerse players in rich, historical settings and empower them to make choices that illuminate how



ordinary people experienced the past. The [educator's guides](#) provide a wealth of resources and activities for teachers and students that show the broader social, political, and economic context of events and perspectives featured in the game.

The intervention can be used for fully in-class, fully remote, or in hybrid teaching and learning situations for grades 5-9. *Mission US's* game mechanics focus on interacting with real and fictional/composite historical characters, exploring environments, and making choices that determine the character's ultimate fate in the Epilogue. The six available missions cover key moments from 1770 to 1945. The series was developed by [Electric Funstuff, Inc.](#), in partnership with [THIRTEEN WNET](#), the [American Social History Project](#), and EDC's [Center for Children and Technology](#).

**Research Base:** In a study of 1,118 students using *For Crown or Colony?*, those taught with the *Mission US* curriculum scored significantly higher on the test of historical knowledge of Colonial America than did students in comparison classrooms. Students in *Mission US* classrooms improved more than students in comparison classrooms in two specific areas of historical knowledge and skill that are prominent in new education standards: 1) Seeing multiple points of view on the past. *Mission US* students gained more knowledge about the perspectives and experiences of different groups such as loyalists, slaves and women during the Revolutionary period. 2) Analyzing cause and effect. *Mission US* students improved significantly more than students in comparison classrooms on questions about the causes of the Revolutionary War, such as conflicts over taxation and the French & Indian War. For more on [this and other studies](#), visit our site.

**Selected Industry Awards for Innovation:** 2020 Teacher's Choice Award, Winner, Classroom Category; 2019, 2015, 2012 International Serious Play Awards, Gold Medal, Education; 2019 Parents' Choice Award, Gold, Mobile App; 2014 Games For Change, Most Significant Impact

**How to Access *Mission US*:** *Mission US* games are available for free using web streaming from the website (as well as downloadable programs for the PC and Mac). Select missions are also available on the iPad for free.

**Government Awards Supporting R&D:** The series is supported by the Corporation of Public Broadcasting, the Institute of Education Sciences, the National Endowment of the Humanities, the National Endowment of the Arts, and the National Parks Service.

# OUTBREAK SQUAD Las Cruces, NM

## *Food Safety program to promote foodborne illness prevention*

Website: [Outbreaksquad.com](http://Outbreaksquad.com)

**Intervention:** The free game, Outbreak Squad, provides an opportunity to learn how our government supports and directs communities when foodborne outbreaks occur. Outbreak Squad is a multilevel, web-based game which helps students think about governmental systems, strategies, and global impacts, through the lens of foodborne outbreaks. The game is suitable for grades 5 and above and can be played at home or within formal and informal classrooms. Players use in game characters to research, educate, heal, and protect people to defeat the outbreak monsters.

The Outbreak Squad website provides additional information about the heroes and their abilities, so youth can learn about career tracks associated with government, education and the food industry. The site also includes an overview of the outbreak monsters, which are modeled after actual outbreaks of foodborne illness in the U.S. Teacher guides are currently being developed and will be housed on the website.



**Research Base:** Outbreak Squad is currently undergoing evaluation and usability research. After playing the game, volunteers will take an online survey giving feedback on usability and effectiveness of the food safety content. Results from this investigation will be analyzed and shared at the project website and in the academic literature. The game has previously undergone formative testing during the development process within the Learning Games Lab research program at New Mexico State University. The Learning Games Lab team in the Department of Innovative Media Research and Extension has been creating

educational media for 38 years using an established design process for multimedia products and games with educational outcomes. Multimedia products created by the Learning Games Lab team have been accessed over 9 million times since 2011.

**Industry Awards for Innovation:** Gold Award Winner, Innovative Media Program, [Association for Communication Excellence 2020](#).

**How to Access Outbreak Squad and more Learning Games Lab Products:** Outbreak Squad is free to play at [Outbreaksquad.com](http://Outbreaksquad.com). The majority of Learning Games Lab products are web-based and available at the [Learninggameslab.com](http://Learninggameslab.com). Learning Games Lab mobile apps are distributed via the Apple App Store.

**Government Awards Supporting R&D:** Outbreak Squad was supported by a SPECA Challenge Grant, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under award number 2015-38414-24223.



**Intervention:** *HistoryMaker VR* ([Video Demo](#)) is a virtual reality (VR) content creation tool that allows students to play the roles of historical figures from US History and capture audio-visual performances within a customizable theater, all in VR.



In this modern version of giving a speech to your class while dressed up as an historical figure, students write their content outside of the VR headset and then upload their content to the in-game teleprompter. In the headset, the app equips students with props, characters, backdrops, and performance tools that allow them to create imaginative custom speeches, stories, reports, or presentations. Students can then export their performance to share with teachers and peers. Out of the headset, *HistoryMaker VR* provides project, account, and classroom file management to organize, view, and share performance files, which can be viewed both in VR and on a standard device screen. *HistoryMaker VR* was iteratively developed with help from educators, students, and subject matter experts and includes free access to extensive product guides and sample lesson plans. *HistoryMaker VR* was released in August 2020 and is free for educators.

**Research Base:** Schell Games partnered with RAND Corporation, a nonprofit research, development, and service agency, for evaluation of *HistoryMaker VR*. Usability and feasibility studies conducted during development suggest that the classroom tool is intuitive for both students and teachers as well as feasible for classroom use in a variety of small- and larger-group activities. Our pilot study scheduled for Spring 2020 is on hold due to the pandemic.

**Awards and Recognition:** 2020 Best VR/AR App or Tool, Tech Edvocate Awards (Nominee)

**How to Access HistoryMaker VR:** *HistoryMaker VR* is completely free for educators (including homeschoolers)! Fill out the form on the [Educator Resources section](#) of the *HistoryMaker VR* website to request a free download code for the [Steam Store](#). For consumer use, *HistoryMaker VR* can be purchased for \$9.99. *HistoryMaker VR* requires the Oculus Rift S VR hardware system along with a computer that meets the manufacturer-provided minimum specifications.

**Government Awards Supporting R&D:** Funded in part by ED/IES SBIR Phase I ([919900118C0028](#)) and Phase II ([91990019C0040](#)) awards.



# 7 Generation Games

Minneapolis, MN & Los Angeles, CA

**Crosscurricular Learning Through Inclusive Histories for All Students**

Website: <https://www.7generationgames.com/>



**Intervention:** 7 Generation Games develops [educational games](#), teacher resources and ready-made inclusive and accessible learning materials that teach across curriculum and in-context. 7 Generation Games are optimized for universal access, from low-end devices to the latest hardware, available offline and in innovative bilingual formats with integrated scaffolding for ELLs.



Educators can access student data via teacher dashboard.

7 Generation Games can be used in the classroom, for distance learning or in a hybrid model, which can be seamlessly adapted in the event that a school is required to change contingency plans with minimal time for advance preparation. Drawing from North and Central Indigenous histories, 7 Generation Games fills a gap in the need for authentic and accurate culturally inclusive social studies materials. Historical, cultural content – aligning to NGSS and state-level standards – is interwoven with Common Core mathematics instruction integrated into the game narrative. For **Grades K-2**, bilingual augmented reality apps introduce students to Indigenous language and culture. For **Grades 3-8**, games teach, test and track student learning, supplemented with a [library of teacher resources](#). For **Grades 6-12**, our [game design curriculum](#) uses video game design as a framework for exploring social studies themes and topics.

**Research Base:** 7 Generation Games software and teacher resources are developed with classroom educators, drawing from academic research, primary sources and real-world best practices. Games are actively developed with and vetted by communities represented, including tribal elders and Indigenous-language speakers. Middle and high school curriculum draws from pedagogical research on knowledge retention and critical thinking. Published peer-reviewed research by 7 Generation Games has demonstrated the value of integrating cultural and historical narrative to create an effective cross-curricular learning experience, through improved student engagement and perseverance. Simultaneously, games produce math improvement outcomes. In a randomized controlled study with two schools in Year 1, students who played 7 Generation Games showed a 30% increase in scores on math concepts covered in-game, pre-test to post-test in just 10 weeks– a 3x improvement over the control group. In Year 2, in an expanded study across four schools, results were replicated. More on our research can be found here: <https://www.7generationgames.com/about/research/>

**Industry Awards for Innovation:** Named No. 2 App for Kids by Educents (2017); Parent and Teacher Choice Award Winner (2018); Back to Homeschool Award (2016, 2017)

**How to Access 7 Generation Games:** 7 Generation Games is available for iOS, Android, Chromebooks, Mac and Windows. School and district licensing is available as an annual subscription. Individual games - free and paid - are available through the company website and on the App and Google Play Store.

**Government Awards Supporting R&D:** 7 Generation Games has been supported by 7 awards from the Small Business Innovation Research Program at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the National Institutes of Health. Additionally, the company received two rounds of funding from CORFO (the Chilean government's economic development agency) through its Start-Up Chile initiative.

# Strange Loop Games Seattle, WA

## *ECO: An Online Virtual World for Environmental Literacy and Collaborative Problem Solving*

Website: <http://www.strangeloopgames.com>



**Intervention:** *ECO* ([Video Demo](#)) is a multi-player ecology game to prepare middle and high school students to be environmentally literate and capable citizens. To play the game, groups or a class of students enter a shared online world featuring a simulated ecosystem of plants and animals. Students co-create their civilization by measuring, modeling, and analyzing the underlying ecosystem, and advocate for proposed plans to classmates and make decisions as a group. Students cooperate and employ science-based decision-making activities to prevent the destruction of the environment. The game includes teacher resources to support the alignment of game play to learning goals, and implementation. *Eco* is designed to be played during or outside of class (at home or after school) to augment traditional curriculum and instruction. *Eco* is designed to target science standards, focusing especially on 21st century skills of collaboration, self-directed learning, leadership, scientific argumentation, and applied learning. *ECO* has been played over 400,000 times a “Very Positive” rating across 4,000 reviews.

**Research Base:** Game design and development was an iterative process, with feedback from teachers and students throughout. Several pilot implementations demonstrate the *ECO* was usable (the game functions) and feasible (teachers were able to integrate *ECO* into classroom practices and students were engaged through game play). Two pilot studies evaluated the promise of *ECO* to support learning. In one with 88 middle and high schools, 44 of whom played the game and 44 who engaged in business as usual activities, who played *ECO* had significantly higher scores on a measure of attitudes towards the environment and on a measure of knowledge of systems than students in the control group. There were no differences between the groups on a post-test measure of content knowledge. In another qualitative study with 39 middle school students playing *Eco*, students engaged in discussions on STEM content, and relevant to civics education and engaging with environment systems.

**Selected Industry Awards and Recognition:** 2019, *ECO* is invited to participate in the UN Climate Summit as an intervention to address the climate crisis: *United Nations press release* ([Read Here](#)), in *USA Today* ([Read Here](#)), and in the *New York Post* ([Read Here](#)); 2018, *Venture Beat Magazine* name *ECO* its Game of the Year ([Read Here](#)); 2017, *ECO* wins the People's Choice award at Earth Games ([Read Here](#)); 2016, *ECO* wins the Grand Prize at the Climate Game Challenge ([Read Here](#)); A class of students at Hathaway Brown School produces a video story of their experience playing *Eco* ([Watch Here](#)); 2017, *Wired UK* features *ECO*. [Read Here](#); 2015, *The Washington Post* features *ECO*. [Read Here](#).

**How to Access *ECO*:** *ECO* is available for purchase on the STEAM platform. *ECO* is currently available for us on PC's with graphics card installed and is preparing to one day be available on game-streaming services like Stadia for use on any device. A limited number of licenses are available for schools interested in implementing *ECO* and participating in research in the 2020-2021 school year.

**Government Awards Supporting *ECO*:** Funding provided by ED/IES SBIR in [2014 Phase I](#) (\$149,833) [2015 Phase II](#) (\$900,000), and [2017 Phase I](#) (\$149,152).

**VOXPOP** Brooklyn, NY



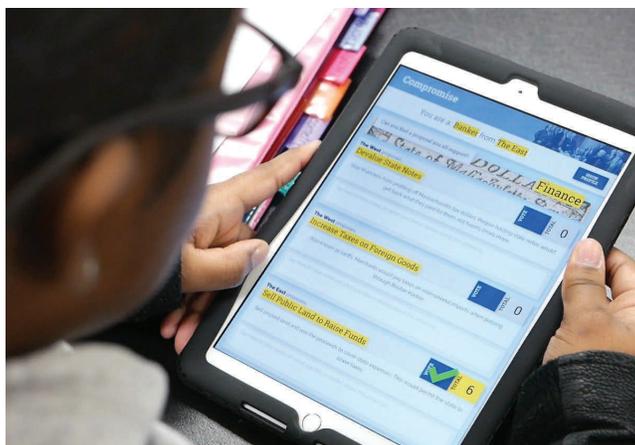
*The power of classroom role-play made simple.*

Website: [www.voxpop.io](http://www.voxpop.io)

**Intervention:** VOXPOP brings civics and history to life in the classroom through media-rich, collaborative role-playing experiences. VOXPOP's software is free and easy for teachers to use. VOXPOP's immersive, live-action role-plays give students a chance to explore different perspectives and work together to navigate defining moments in American History.



VOXPOP can be used for fully in-class or fully remote teaching and learning situations. Our role-plays are aimed primarily at high school U.S. history, civics, and social studies classes. VOXPOP addresses 21st century standards of Communication, Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Collaboration, Research, Reflection, and Evaluation. In the 2020-2021 school year, VOXPOP will offer role-plays on the Shays Rebellion (1786), the Nullification Crisis (1833), the Dorr Rebellion (1842), the Pullman Strike (1894), and the AIDS Crisis (1980s). To see VOXPOP in action, check out our [Video Demo](#).



**Research Base:** While developing the VOXPOP prototype, we conducted a preliminary study regarding its usability and outcomes under the guidance of Camillia Matuk, Associate Professor of Educational Communication and Technology at NYU Steinhardt. Teachers appreciated that the VOXPOP technology was easy for both students and teachers. "The transitions are really fast, and it provides them with just enough information to be able to talk about the issues," said Richard Kermond, a U.S. History teacher in Scituate, MA.

VOXPOP gives students the space to discuss contemporary issues. In the words of Thomas Sangermano, a Government teacher in Danvers, MA, VOXPOP "gets kids to really engage, using historical context to flesh out current

topics...gun rights, who can vote...we're still arguing about the same things." A majority of students (86.5%) reported feeling more knowledgeable following their participation in VOXPOP. A majority of students (73.8-78.9%) also noted greater appreciation of the process of lawmaking and advocacy.

Our sample included 7 teachers and 224 students from three public schools in the Northeastern United States, each serving racially, ethnically and economically diverse populations. A larger pilot study is planned for 2021 to test evidence of promise. For more information on VOXPOP's research, see [www.voxpop.io/study](http://www.voxpop.io/study).

**How to Access VOXPOP:** VOXPOP is free to use. It is accessible on any web-enabled device, including Chromebooks, iPads, Tablets and PCs. Visit [www.voxpop.io](http://www.voxpop.io) to sign up.

**Government Awards Supporting R&D:** VOXPOP has been supported by a grant from the Department of Education and Small Business Innovation Research.

# Guide to Our Content Providers



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## Center for Civic Education

The [Center for Civic Education](#) offers effective, research-backed programs in civic education for democracy, including We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution, an innovative course of instruction on the history and principles of the United States constitutional democratic republic, and Project Citizen, an action civics curriculum that challenges students to work together, conducting research in their community to discover problems that require engagement with public policy and proposing their own solutions.

## Center on Representative Government

Founded in 1999 by former Congressman Lee Hamilton, the [Center on Representative Government](#)'s mission is to help prepare the next generation of citizens by creating programs that encourage civic participation to seek solutions to the many challenges that confront our nation today. Besides creating award-winning digital interactives, the Center conducts annual surveys on Congress' performance, an annual report on Indiana's Civic Health Index, monthly columns on representative government, speaker series, and professional development for educators.

## Chef Koochooloo

[Chef Koochooloo](#) is a technological platform that teaches kids Social Responsibility, Global Competency, and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) through cooking healthy international recipes, via dynamic educational apps, interactive services, and engaging curriculum. Our enrichment program blends humanity's oldest means of socialization—cooking and eating together—with its most modern academic lessons. Socially sensitive, relevant, and aligned with Common Core, New Generation Science Standards (NGSS), IB and ELA standards, the student embarks on a delicious, scientific culinary journey, discovering new countries, cultures, and peoples.

## Electric Funstuff

The best games listen to you. Your choices matter. You have agency and the game world responds in satisfying and sometimes unexpected ways. When it's working, no medium rivals the lean-in engagement good games create. Creating that engagement and infusing it with the learning objectives and outcomes we want to achieve for our players (students), and their teachers, is at the heart of our practice. Making a good game is hard, making one that teaches is harder still, and making one that makes measurable improvements in learning outcomes, while also being easy to implement in any classroom with any teacher is a really tall order. But that's [Electric Funstuff](#).

# FableVision Games

[FableVision Games](#) distributes interactive experiences and media created by [FableVision Studios](#) and partners. In 2020, the studio launched FableVision Games with games for the classroom to support the growing need for distance learning and game-based learning resources. FableVision Studios has cultivated over two decades of experience in the educational technology industry and combines forces with FableVision founder Peter H. Reynolds, [FableVision Learning](#), and the [Reynolds Center for Teaching, Learning, and Creativity](#).

## Gigantic Mechanic

[Gigantic Mechanic](#) is a game design studio that works with museums, festivals and cities to create deeply engaging, interactive experiences through social & physical play. We have worked with institutions like the New York Hall of Science, Institute of Play, Quest to Learn and Games for Change to create a wide range of educational experiences. We are currently developing [VOXPOP](#), role-playing games where students work together to navigate defining crises in American history. VOXPOP makes it easy for teachers to bring media-rich, live-action, collaborative role-plays into their remote and in-person classrooms. One student who played VOXPOP said, "It reminds you that people like you can push laws into place...not only that it's controlled by the government, but it also can be controlled by the people." We believe that games provide a unique opportunity to empower and inspire players, both in the moment and into the future.

## GlobalEd Community Edition (CE)

[GlobalEd Community Edition \(CE\)](#) is a simulation game where students roleplay as delegates to an international crisis summit to solve a real-world, socio-scientific problem. Games can be conducted entirely virtually with existing classroom technologies. GlobalEd CE can be used with middle to high school social studies classes in face-to-face, fully virtual, or hybrid/blended environments. Simulations can last between 1 day and 1 month, depending on teachers' goals.

## Half Full Nelson

[Half Full Nelson](#) is an award-winning media development company based in Indianapolis, Indiana that develops free educational games for K-12 students. Founded in 2015, HFN has developed games in conjunction with researchers and educators from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, the Center on Representative Government at Indiana University, the IU School of Medicine - Neuropsychology, and the University of Mississippi. HFN has developed games that help fight addiction, teach civic engagement using primary source documents, learn business development, explore an ecosystem, and time travel. Other projects use augmented reality (AR) to teach about cell life, or appreciate the arts using virtual reality (VR) in projects like Dreams of Dali.

# Historic Hudson Valley

[Historic Hudson Valley](#) is a not-for-profit education organization in Westchester County, New York. Through school and public programs at its historic sites and online, Historic Hudson Valley illuminates the history of Northern slavery, provides meaningful context for its legacy today, and helps teachers share this important story with accuracy and sensitivity.

## iCivics

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor founded iCivics in 2009 to transform the field through innovative, free educational video games and lessons that teach students to be knowledgeable, curious, and engaged in civic life. Today, iCivics is the nation's largest provider of civic education curriculum, with its resources used by over 120,000 educators and more than 7.5 million students each year nationwide. Visit [www.icivics.org](http://www.icivics.org) to learn more.

## KidCitizen

[KidCitizen](#) provides authentic, age appropriate interactive episodes with primary source materials for children in Grades K-5, guided by research-informed practices and evidence-based pedagogy. Episodes engage children in historical inquiry and civic engagement by investigating primary sources, and connecting what they find with their daily lives. The episodes capitalize on the active and social nature of young children's learning, using primary sources for rich demonstrations, interactions, and models of literacy in the course of innovative hands-on activities that make academic content meaningful, build on prior experiences, and foster visual literacy and historical inquiry. Each KidCitizen episode draws on a set of primary source photographs from the Library of Congress. KidCitizen was created by an interdisciplinary team of historians, educators, child development specialists, & game designers. All episodes run on PCs, Macs, Chromebooks, and iOS and Android mobile devices and access is free.

## Learning Games Lab

The [Learning Games Lab](#) at New Mexico State University is a nationally recognized production studio, research lab, and testing space for multimedia and game-based learning. Partnering with other institutions, research agencies and nonprofits, the Learning Games Lab designs, develops, and provides user testing of digital educational modules. Their process includes studying audience needs, identifying educational goals, planning and prototyping, and formative testing to assess user experience. These products reach national and international audiences, including K-12 students and teachers, college students, agricultural producers, the workforce, Extension clientele, and the public. These educational products have received major awards, including gold awards and Best of Show from the International Serious Play Conference, finalist status at the Serious Games Showcase & Challenge, and Best Overall Digital Game at the Meaningful Play Conference. Learning Games Lab games and apps have been played more than 18 million times since 2015.

# Schell Games

[Schell Games](#) is the largest full-service education and entertainment game development company in the United States. The company is led by award-winning game designer and author, Jesse Schell. Since 2002, Schell Games has worked with world-class clients and partners to create interactive experiences that delight and inspire players of all ages across all platforms. We are uniquely capable of bridging the worlds of education and entertainment to create games that are engaging, enriching, and meaningfully transformational.

# Second Avenue Learning

Founded in 2006 by educators and game designers, [Second Avenue Learning](#) builds custom award-winning serious games, simulations, content, and courses that are innovative, pedagogically accurate, and engaging. Our name, Second Avenue Learning, is a metaphor for providing an alternative path to learning. We believe that thoughtful technology interventions are a critical enabler to impactful teaching and learning. We integrate creativity and innovation with disciplined testing and quality assurance process to ensure the products we develop provide unique value. Let's reimagine learning together!

# 7 Generation Games

[7 Generation Games](#) makes immersive video games and interactive apps integrating social studies, mathematics and elements of language arts with products for K-12. Supplemented by a library of teacher resources, content is taught in crosscurricular context and fills a gap in the need for authentic and accurate culturally inclusive social studies materials. 7 Generation Games are optimized for universal access, from low-end devices to the latest hardware, available offline and in innovative bilingual formats with integrated scaffolding for ELLs. Educators can access student data via teacher dashboard.

# Strange Loop Games

We believe games have the potential to change worlds. At [Strange Loop](#), our goal is to build games that go beyond fun, creating experiences that give our players a new perspective on the world, connect communities together, and redefine what it means to 'play'. Through our flagship title Eco we aim to bridge the gap between games and education, building worlds that challenge players to solve the same global challenges that our real world faces, working in economies, governments, and scientific simulation that mirror our own.



# Social Studies Innovation Network

## ABOUT US

The Social Studies Innovation Network's mission is to advance innovative approaches to social studies in public and private K-12 schools throughout the United States for the benefit of all students and teachers.



[SocialStudiesInnovation.org](https://www.SocialStudiesInnovation.org)