simSchool Earns Wave 1 Grant from Next Generation Learning Challenges

Westlake Village, CA, May 25, 2011 --(PR.com)-- Next Generation Learning Challenges (NGLC) has awarded a grant to the “simSchool modules Project” sponsored by the Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE) in collaboration with CurveShift (simSchool) and Pragmatic Solutions, Inc. (Leverage) Key partners also include University of North Texas, Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education and FableVision as well as Kean University and Marygrove College who are the first of twelve institutions of Higher Education to be announced to support the module development.

The Wave 1 award will fund deeper learning modules for learning to teach via simSchool, a game-like simulation that develops teaching skills. simSchool will be disseminated via an international network of colleges of education and be scaled to reach all future teachers in the U.S. simSchool dynamically simulates classroom learner behaviors, emulates teaching and learning activities, and has been shown to generate relevant benefits concerning mastery of deeper learning outcomes such as self-efficacy, critical thinking, complex problem solving and collaboration.

“Our goal is to enhance our simSchool platform, a ‘flight simulator’ for teachers, to become a fully-realized teacher training platform for higher education,” said David Gibson Ed. D. CurveShift Founder. “By incorporating meaningful instructional modules and deep analytics, we know we can help pre-service teachers better contextualize and target their own learning and improve their overall self-efficacy as current college students and future educational professionals,” continued Gibson.

The simSchool module project was selected from a field of more than 600 pre-proposals and 50 finalists. NGLC focuses on identifying and scaling technology-enabled approaches to dramatically improve college readiness and completion by addressing a continuum of interrelated issues spanning secondary and postsecondary education from grades 6 through college. NGLC is led by EDUCAUSE in partnership with The League for Innovation in the Community College, the International Association of K-12 Online Learning, and the Council of Chief State School Officers. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation helped design the Next Generation Learning Challenges, and fund the initiative.

About simSchool and CurveShift:

simSchool is a classroom simulation that supports the rapid accumulation of a teacher's experience in analyzing student differences, adapting instruction to individual learner needs, gathering data about the impacts of instruction, and seeing the results of their teaching. It’s a virtual learning environment where instructors can explore instructional strategies, examine classroom management techniques, and practice building relationships with students that will translate into increased learning. The students may be virtual, but their very real behaviors are based on decades of psychological and behavioral research. The results teacher users experience are real and measureable, too, and include improvement in general teaching skill, improved confidence in using technology, and an increased belief that the teacher-user has the skills and ability to make a difference in a child’s life. Using simSchool has even been shown to improve pre-service teachers’ performance in teacher preparation courses and attitudes toward inclusion...
of special needs students. In these ways and more, simSchool enables transformational experiences for teachers to help them become more effective leaders in their classrooms and learning communities. For more information on simSchool, please visit www.simSchool.org.

CurveShift designs and distributes high quality digital tools and resources for K12 teacher and organizational effectiveness. CurveShift owns over $12 million worth of digital content, platforms, authoring tools and courseware aimed at K-12 teacher preparation and development. CurveShift's founders and their colleagues developed these assets over the past decade through government grants and contracts. Many of the products are already successful and in use across many industry segments. For more information on simSchool, please visit www.curveshift.com.

About Leverage™ Adaptive Learning Platform and Pragmatic Solutions, Inc.
Leverage™ Adaptive Learning Platform was developed by Pragmatic Solutions, Inc. under military specs to support large-scale, simulations, virtual environments, and learning management systems. Central to Leverage’s capabilities is the ability to seamlessly manage millions of user accounts, collect terabytes of data, execute thousands of business rules, and deliver real-time analytics and feedback to multiple classes of end users without impacting the flow or delivery of content or game play. Leverage currently serves as the backend framework for programs in government, business, education, research, corporate training, and commercial entertainment. Tens of thousands of content objects, dynamic media tools, game scenarios, and user-specific items and messages flow in and out of Leverage’s centralized database and interfaces hourly to users in 40 countries around the world. For more information on Leverage or Pragmatic Solutions, Inc., please visit www.pr-sol.com.

Pragmatic Solutions, Inc. headquartered in Westlake Village, CA, is a data modeling innovator with extensive organizational expertise in creating stable, scalable database and server architecture conducive to business information and learning management systems. Over the past decade, Pragmatic has worked at the leading edge of systems design, exploring how advanced data collection, inference and analysis tools can be used to impact performance, engagement, and learning in simulations, games, virtual worlds, and other interactive web environments. Pragmatic’s systems currently influence tens of millions of users’ online experiences around the world.

Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE)
AACE (founded in 1981) is an international, educational, and professional organization dedicated to the advancement of the knowledge, theory and quality of learning and teaching at all levels with information technology. For simSchool Modules, AACE will house "modules" created by participating partners in EdITLib, an open source library of education and information technology digital resources. http://aace.org/

Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education (SITE)
SITE promotes the development and dissemination of theoretical knowledge, conceptual research, and professional practice knowledge through the SITE conference, books, collaborative projects with other organizations, and the Journal of Technology and Teacher Education. SITE (founded in 1990) is a society of the Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE). During the simSchool
Modules project, SITE will operate as a communications hub, both promoting the project to its global constituency of higher ed institutions and helping disseminate news on going progress and research results. http://site.aace.org/

University of North Texas (UNT)
UNT is a student-focused, public, research university located in Denton, Texas. One of Texas' largest universities, UNT offers 97 bachelor's, 88 master's and 40 doctoral degree programs within the university's 12 colleges and schools. During the simSchool Modules project, UNT will serve as the Research Center on Teaching and Learning with simSchool. http://www.unt.edu/

FableVision
Boston-based FableVision Studios creates award-winning websites, games & activities, animated films, interactive graphic novels, museum kiosks, digital storybooks, desktop applications, and iPhone apps. FableVision is dedicated to helping ALL learners reach their full potential and to telling "stories that matter, stories that move." During the simSchool Modules Project, FableVision's team will help direct creative and business development toward improving user experiences and enhancing the simSchool brand. http://fablevision.com/

About NGLC
NGLC reflects a unique synergy resulting from the blended expertise, leadership, and credibility of both institutional and technology leaders who share a commitment to resolving the educational challenges our students – and the country - faces, and to expanding the adoption of proven innovations within timelines that will demonstrate measurable impact on the problems of the day. NGLC is led by EDUCAUSE in partnership with the League for Innovation in the Community College, the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL), and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Funding is being provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

For More information on the Phase 1 NGLC Program: www.nextgenlearning.org.

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