

## Finding Aid to the Institute of Play Records, 2007-2022

### Summary Information

**Title:** Institute of Play records

**Creator:** Institute of Play (primary)

**ID:** 119.6926

**Date:** 2007-2022 (inclusive)

**Extent:** 0.3 linear feet (physical); 1 GB (digital)

**Language:** The materials in this collection are in English.

**Abstract:** This collection contains both physical and digital information about the Institute of Play and its associated Quest to Learn project. The materials are dated between 2007 and 2022.

**Repository:**

Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong  
One Manhattan Square  
Rochester, New York 14607  
585.263.2700  
library@museumofplay.org

### Administrative Information

**Conditions Governing Use:** This collection is open for research use by staff of The Strong and by users of its library and archives. Though the donors have not transferred intellectual property rights (including, but not limited to any copyright, trademark, and associated rights therein) to The Strong, they have given permission for The Strong to make copies in all media for museum, educational, and research purposes.

**Custodial History:** The Institute of Play records were donated to The Strong in January 2020 as a gift of the Institute of Play. The papers were accessioned by The Strong under Object ID 119.6926 and were received from Katie Salen Tekinbaş, along with several games and objects related to the Institute of Play.

**Preferred citation for publication:** Institute of Play records, Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong

**Processed by:** Julia Novakovic, October 2022

### Controlled Access Terms

#### Personal Names

- Rufo-Tepper, Rebecca
- Salen, Katie
- Shapiro, Arana
- Tekinbaş, Katie Salen
- Torres, Robert
- Wolozin, Loretta

**Corporate Names**

- Institute of Play
- John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
- New Visions for Public Schools
- Quest to Learn (School)

**Subjects**

- Experiential learning
- Institute of Play
- Instructional systems
- Learning
- Play
- Play -- Research
- Play-based learning
- Quest to Learn (School)

**Historical Note**

Founded by a group of game designers and educators in 2007, the Institute of Play created learning experiences based on the principles of game design. They sought to transform education through play, ultimately developing a model school in New York City that would use “game-like learning” to empower and engage students.

Through the support from the MacArthur Foundation in partnership with New Visions for Public Schools, The New School, and the Pearson Foundation, Quest to Learn opened in fall 2009. The curriculum integrated digital and analog games into “domains,” focusing on applied knowledge and conceptual thinking. Domains included The Way Things Work (math and science); Codeworlds (integrated English language arts, math, and computer programming); Being, Space, and Place (social studies and English language arts); Wellness (physical education, socioemotional learning, and health); and Sports for the Mind (game design and media arts). Quest to Learn, which began with one sixth grade class in 2009, supported critical thinking skills, media literacy, and technology to educate students for success in the 21st century. By 2015, Quest to Learn in Manhattan had encompassed grades 6 through 12 to become a fully functioning combined middle and high school, after adding a new grade level each year.

Among the Institute of Play’s other major accomplishments were the co-development of the Gamestar Mechanic (a game which teaches students how to build games) and a partnership with Nintendo to introduce Nintendo Labo-themed curriculum to teach STEAM principles to students. After more than a decade of supporting game-based learning initiatives, the Institute of Play closed in 2019, citing difficulty in securing sustainable funding. During its existence, the Institute of Play directly worked with more than 1,500 teachers and 50 educational institutions across the country. (As of 2022, Quest to Learn remains in operation.)

**Collection Scope and Content Note**

The Institute of Play records contain planning materials, notes, reports, marketing materials, curriculum design packs, videos of game-like learning, game information, and other documentation relating to Quest to Learn and the Institute of Play. Additional scope and content information can be found in the Contents List section of this finding aid.

The Institute of Play records have been arranged into two series. The physical materials are housed in one archival document box; digital materials are accessible on-site at The Strong.

**System of Arrangement**

Series I: Institute of Play information, 2007-2022 and n.d.

Series II: Quest to Learn, 2009-2019 and n.d.

## Contents List

### Series I: Institute of Play information, 2007-2022 and n.d.

**Scope and Content Note:** This series holds planning materials, notes, marketing information, a game co-created for the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), and information about the Gamestar Mechanic game engine developed by the Institute of Play. Also included in this series is the saved Twitter feed for the organization.

#### Box 1

- Folder 1 “The Game School” planning materials, correspondence, outlines, and notes; 2007 and n.d.
- Folder 2 Institute of Play folders and stickers, n.d.
- Folder 3 Institute of Play informational folder on Quest to Learn, n.d. [c. 2010?]
- Folder 4 “Everyone’s a Critic,” MoMA Game, developed by MoMA and Institute of Play, n.d. [corresponds to digital I\_Folder 03]

#### Digital-I

- Folder 1 **Folder 01\_IoP logos** [8 files]  
Contains 8 .EPS/.PDF/.PNG files [logos and variations, n.d. [c. 2008 - 2009?]]
- Folder 2 **Folder 02\_Twitter feed** [1 file]  
Contains 1 .PDF [Twitter feed @InstituteofPlay text capture], 2022
- Folder 3 **Folder 03\_MoMA game** [1 file]  
Contains 1 .PDF [“MoMA\_CRITIC v16 (2).pdf” game], n.d. [corresponds to physical Box 1, Folder 4]
- Folder 4 **Folder 04\_Gamestar Mechanic** [1 file + website]
  - “01. Gamestar\_Mechanic\_Learning\_Guide\_v1.1.pdf” [“Gamestar Mechanic Learning Guide”], 2010
  - “Gamestar Mechanic.html” [Website for Gamestar Mechanic], n.d. [c. 2019]
- Folder 5 **Folder 05\_Nintendo Labo** [1 file]  
Contains 1 .PDF [“Nintendo Labo Teacher Guide”], n.d. [c. 2018?]

**Series II: Quest to Learn, 2009-2019 and n.d.**

**Scope and Content Note:** This series contains both physical and digital informational materials, teacher tools, games, videos, and reference materials about the Quest to Learn school developed by the Institute of Play. Four “print and play” game packs, as well as detailed information about curriculum and game design, may be of particular interest to researchers.

**Box 1**

- Folder 5 *Quest to Learn: Developing the School for Digital Kids*, by Katie Salen, Robert Torres, Loretta Wolozin, Rebecca Rufo-Tepper, and Arana Shapiro; MacArthur Foundation report, 2011 [corresponds to digital II\_Folder 01]
- Folder 6 Quest to Learn brochures and handouts, n.d. [c. 2009-2010?]
- Folder 7 Quest to Learn informational folders, n.d. [c. 2010?]
- Folder 8 “Q2L Yearbook 2012,” Quest to Learn Middle School, 2012
- Folder 9 *The New York Times Magazine*, Education Issue, September 19, 2010 [“Games Theory” article on Institute of Play/Quest to Learn], 2010

**Digital-II**

- Folder 1 **Folder 01\_Quest to Learn book** [1 file]  
Contains 1 .PDF [“01. Quest to Learn-Developing the School for Digital Kids\_MacArthur Foundation Report.pdf”], 2011 [corresponds to physical Box 1, Folder 5]
- Folder 2 **Folder 02\_Teacher Tools**  
*01\_TeacherQuest Mentorship Training* [2 files]
- “01. Mentorship Program Toolkit.pdf,” n.d. [c. 2015?]
  - “02. TeacherQuest Facilitators Guide,” n.d. [c. 2015?]
- 02\_Mission packs* [4 files]
- “01. Mission-Pack-Dr-Smallz.pdf” [“Mission Pack: Dr. Smallz, Can you save a dying patient’s life?, Grades 6-7, Science, 13 weeks, version 1.0”], n.d.
  - “02. Mission-Pack-I-Spy-Greece.pdf” [“Mission Pack: I Spy Greece, Ever wanted to be a spy?, Grade 6, Social Studies, 13 weeks, version 1.0”], n.d.
  - “03. Mission-Pack-Self-On-The-Stand.pdf” [“Mission Pack: Self on the Stand, What is ‘the self’?, Grade 9, English Language Arts, 16 weeks, version 1.0”], n.d.
  - “04. Mission-Pack-Shark-Tank.pdf” [“Mission Pack: Shark Tank, Can you get investors for your new business?, Grade 9, Math, 16 weeks, version 1.0”], n.d.
- 03\_Design packs* [6 files]
- “01. Games for Learning Design Pack\_070914.pdf” [“Q: Designing Games for Learning: A Resource for Game Designers and Educators,” version 1.0], 2014
  - “02. IOP\_QDesignPack\_Curriculum\_1.1\_092713.pdf” [“Q: Design Pack: Curriculum,” version 1.1], 2013
  - “03. IOP\_QDesignPack\_GamesandLearning\_1.0\_092713.pdf” [“Q: Design Pack: Games and Learning,” version 1.0], 2013

- “04. IOP\_QDesignPack\_School\_1.0\_090413.pdf” [“Q: Design Pack: School,” version 1.0], 2013
  - “05. IOP\_QDesignPack\_SystemsThinking\_1.0\_092713.pdf” [“Q: Design Pack: Systems Thinking,” version 1.0], 2013
- Folder 3      **Folder 03\_Games**
- 01\_Absolute Blast* [2 files]
- “01. Absolute Blast Print and Play Game Pack.pdf” [“Absolute Blast! A rocket-launching math game to boost understanding of integers, operations and absolute value for grades 6 through 8; Print + Play Game Pack”], n.d.
  - “02. Absolute Blast\_videoplayback.mp4” [“Absolute Blast Video Tutorial”], n.d. (02:21)
- 02\_Caterpillar* [3 files]
- “01. Caterpillar Rules\_022819.pdf” [“How to Play Caterpillar”], 2019
  - “02. Caterpillar\_Board\_Original\_022819.pdf” [Caterpillar board], 2019
  - “03. Caterpillar\_FrequencyTable\_022819.pdf” [Caterpillar Frequency Table], 2019
- 03\_Galactic Mappers* [23 files]
- “01. IOP\_GalacticMappers\_Rules\_112018.pdf” [“Galactic Mappers: A Game of Physical Geography and Mapping Skills”], n.d. [c. 2011?]
  - “02. galactic mappers print and play\_112018.pdf” [Galactic Mappers print and play cars and map keys], 2011
  - Folder: “03. Game cards” [21 files]
    - Contains .PNG files [card graphics], 2019
- 04\_Socratic Smackdown* [2 files]
- “01. Socratic Smackdown Print and Play Game Pack.pdf” [“Socratic Smackdown: A versatile discussion-based humanities game to practice argumentation around any text or topic for grades 6 through 12; Print + Play Game Pack”], n.d.
  - “02. Socratic Smackdown\_videoplayback.mp4” [“Socratic Smackdown Video Tutorial”], n.d. (01:23)
- Folder 4      **Folder 04\_Videos**
- 01\_Game rollout videos* [3 files]
- “01. How to Use Games for Assessment.mp4” [“Game Assessment Video Tutorial”], n.d. (02:37)
  - “02. How to Manage Game Play in the Classroom.mp4” [“Game Management Video Tutorial”], n.d. (02:37)
  - “03. How to Roll-Out a Game in the Classroom.mp4” [“Game Roll-Out Video Tutorial”], n.d. (02:11)
- 02\_Game-like learning videos* [8 files]
- “01. Everyone is a Participant \_ Rebecca Grodner.mp4” [“Quest Learning in Action: Everyone is a Participant,” Rebecca Grodner and students], n.d. (03:51)

- “02. Failure is Reframed as Iteration \_ Rachelle Vallon.mp4” [“Quest Learning in Action: Failure is Reframed as Iteration,” Rachelle Vallon and students], n.d. (04:54)
- “03. It Kinda Feels Like Play \_ Leah Hirsch.mp4” [“Quest Learning in Action: It Kinda Feels Like Play,” Leah Hirsch and students], n.d. (03:42)
- “04. Learning happens by doing \_ Kate Selkirk.mp4” [“Quest Learning in Action: Learning Happens by Doing,” Kate Selkirk and students], n.d. (04:50)
- “05. Feedback is Immediate & Ongoing \_ C. Ross Flatt.mp4” [“Quest Learning in Action: Feedback is Immediate and Ongoing,” C. Ross Flatt and students], n.d. (04:39)
- “06. Challenge is Constant \_ Alicia Iannucci.mp4” [“Quest Learning in Action: Challenge is Constant,” Alicia Iannucci and students], n.d. (04:26)
- “07. Everything is Interconnected \_ Cameron Brown.mp4” [“Quest Learning in Action: Everything is Interconnected,” Cameron Brown and students], n.d. (05:35)
- “08. Game-like Learning Principles \_ instituteofplay.pdf” [“Game-Like Learning Principles” website text], 2019

Folder 5

**Folder 05\_Assessing Quest to Learn** [1 file]

Contains 1 .PDF [“01. Streams” (“Where Streams Converge: Using Evidence-Centered Design to Assess Quest to Learn,” Valerie J. Shute and Robert J. Torres, chapter in *Technology-Based Assessments for 21st Century Skills*, pages 91-124)], 2011