

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 6, 2021

Amanda Kelly

PLACE: Professional Learning and Community Education  
School of Education, University of Wisconsin–Madison  
conferences@education.wisc.edu

**Play Make Learn Announces Dr. Benjamin Stokes as the  
2021 [Play Make Learn Conference](#) Keynote Speaker**

*Stokes is a professor of Communication Studies who investigates civic media, community engagement, and neighborhood empowerment.*

**Madison, WI:** The Play Make Learn Conference will host keynote speaker Dr. Benjamin Stokes during the virtual event held August 5–6, 2021. Stokes, author of “[Locally Played: Real-World Games for Stronger Places and Communities](#),” is an assistant professor at American University (AU) where he directs The Playful City Lab. His research investigates civic media, community engagement, and neighborhood empowerment.

[Play Make Learn \(PML\)](#) is a gathering of researchers, game designers, makers, artists, and educators. The 2021 virtual conference is a place for collaboration and discovery in the design, research, and practice of gaming, makerspaces, classrooms, and the arts. The conference will feature a keynote speaker, concurrent sessions, special access to recorded content, and more.

“Play Make Learn is one of the only places I know where practicing teachers, researchers, designers, and policy makers are talking together about games, making, and the arts as part of one conversation,” said David Gagnon, Play Make Learn committee member and founder and director of Field Day Learning Games. “For these ideas, the whole is greater than the parts!”

“PML allows us to think globally and act locally,” said YJ Kim, Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction. “That is, it has the spirit of being true to Wisconsin and putting Wisconsin at the center, yet the creative ideas and innovations have broader implications beyond Wisconsin. PML is one of the living examples of the Wisconsin idea: Education should influence people’s lives beyond the boundaries of the classroom.”

“In the time of COVID, it is more important than ever to think about how we can create dynamic, engaging learning environments in virtual and informal spaces,” Rich Halverson, Associate Dean for Innovation, Outreach, and Partnerships and Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, said.

**This Year’s Competitions:**

- Game designers are invited to apply for a GEE! Learning Game Award. Conference judges are looking for video games that are fun, educational, and novel. The submission deadline for a GEE! Learning Game Award is June 1. [Learn more](#).
- PBS Wisconsin Education and Play Make Learn invite students in grades K-12 to submit their media productions for the first ever Click Youth Media Challenge. Student-made media will be available to view during the 2021 Play Make Learn Conference. Prizes will be awarded at the conference for top entries. Students and media educators will be invited to participate in a panel with an audience of experts. The submission deadline for the Click Youth Media Challenge is June 1. [Learn more](#).

**When:** August 5–6, 2021

**Where:** Online

**Program Fee:** Early registration rate of \$100 is available for the first 100 registrants! Regular program fee is \$125.

For more information about the 2021 Play Make Learn Conference, [visit our website](#).

**About PLACE:** The Play Make Learn Conference is produced by the office of [Professional Learning and Community Education](#). PLACE draws on the best ideas and people in the UW–Madison School of Education to provide transformational learning experiences for artists, educators, leaders, and lifelong learners around the world.