

digital media + learning competition 6



About DML Competition 6: Playlists for Learning

Design it. Build it. Scale it.

We're at a critical moment. More than ever, youth need viable alternatives to traditional learning pathways that help them succeed in a constantly changing world. After ten years of research and design experiments on connected learning, we have reached a tipping point.

Connected learning is a transformative pedagogical approach that provides unique opportunities to knit together academics, passions and interests in ways that meaningfully advance learning and opportunities. Connected learning is relevant for the real-world. It can happen anywhere, anytime, and across any device. It's social. It's hands-on. It's active. It's networked. It's personal. It's effective.

It's time to think big.

How can we scale connected learning? How can we bring this powerful pedagogical approach to youth everywhere? How can we empower young minds and ensure that young people from all backgrounds have the opportunities they need to thrive in the connected age?

The sixth and final Digital Media and Learning Competition — Playlists for Learning — seeks to close the opportunity gap by scaling established connected learning resources and experiences through the development of playlists. This new approach, led by an innovative community of thought-leaders, academics, practitioners, educators, designers, technologists, and media artists, is leading the transformation of curriculum design and learning for our connected age. This competition is designed to support learning innovators in adopting, advancing, and adapting playlists for the custom design of connected learning.

Playlists for Learning encourages proposals that promote creative, interest-driven playlists that advance connected learning opportunities for youth both in and out of school. Proposed learning should be made verifiable and credible with the use of digital badges.

Press play to connect learning

A **connected learning playlist** is a curated group of digital and local connected learning experiences and resources (e.g. videos, websites, books, games, articles, etc.). A playlist weaves together these learning experiences into a sequenced pathway centered on a common theme. Playlists broaden opportunities to engage in cohesive, interest-driven connected learning experiences that combine in-school, out-of-school, employer-based, and online learning. A powerful tool for scale, they increase access to opportunities for all and bring transformative change to youth, especially those locked out of traditional paths to success.

By connecting the dots across digital and local spaces, connected learning playlists enable young people to easily find and pursue fun and engaging learning experiences that cross traditional institutional silos and curricula. Just as iTunes or Spotify playlists allow users to easily remix content across albums, connected learning playlists offer similarly personalized learning experiences.

The power of playlists lies in the opportunity for collaboration and discovery. One organization can design a sequence based on its own specific goals; multiple providers may want to work together to include many types and sources of learning. These collaborative playlists create a rich network of experiences for learners. As more and more playlists are built on shared distribution platforms, the connections across all learning experiences will increasingly form part of an expansive network of learning.

Unlock real-world opportunities

Successful completion of a playlist will result in a badge that has the potential to unlock real world opportunities. A **badge** is a publicly shareable digital credential that provides evidence of a substantive learning outcome.

Combined with playlists, badges guide a learner's progression through a sequenced pathway and track the learner's journey. Earned by completing a single experience, an entire playlist, or multiple playlists, badges provide validation and offer a credible way to represent significant accomplishments.

Call Details

DML Competition 6: Playlists for Learning funds the development of connected learning playlists for learners ages 13 and up. Successful applicants will create innovative and transformative learning playlists composed of existing or newly created learning resources and experiences that bring proven connected learning activities and events to scale.

Competitive applications will create playlists

- that scale existing connected learning resources and opportunities to new audiences through cross-organization and cross-institution collaborations;
- that sequence learning experiences and content into engaging and coherent learning pathways that embody the principles of connected learning;
- that create connected learning experiences which result in real-world opportunities for youth (e.g. internships, workshops, jobs, mentoring, job-shadowing experiences, etc.);
- that validate learning pathways by aligning with badges and hold the potential to unlock opportunities;
- that target learners ages 13 years and up; and
- that are compatible with the LRNG platform* and its playlist functionality; and
- may also be compatible with other learning platforms.

**LRNG is one of the earliest adopters of learning playlists, and the leader in adapting them for connected learning. DML Competition 6 requires that playlists be compatible with, though not limited to, the LRNG platform.*

Awards

A total of \$700,000 in awards will be granted in two funding categories:

Level 1: awards up to \$50,000

Level 2: awards from \$50,000 to \$125,000

Most awards will be made at Level 1. Level 2 awards will be reserved for proposals that feature complex multi-institution or multi-organization collaborations and/or propose a significant scope of work that justifies the higher budget request.

Budgets will be closely evaluated and should properly reflect what your organization will need to develop the learning playlists. Judges will assess whether the budget is appropriate to the proposed scope of work by considering its level and complexity, type and duration of required expertise and resources, level of institutional support, etc. For more information about budget development, see the FAQ.

Timeline

DML Competition 6 will accept applications beginning April 4, 2016. Final applications are due May 13, 2016 at 5pm PST. Winners will be announced in late July 2016.

Who can participate

Single organizations or institutions, and/or multi-institution/multi-organization collaborative partnerships that are committed to scaling connected learning content and experiences to local and global audiences, including educators and designers working in or with:

- museums;
- libraries;
- out-of-school programs;
- schools and/or school districts;
- governmental and non-governmental organizations;
- civic/community organizations;
- non-profits;
- other youth-serving institutions/organizations; or
- institutions of higher education.

Playlists must have utility beyond the applicant organization or institution. They must scale connected learning resources and opportunities to a broader audience. Collaboration is strongly encouraged.

International applicants are welcome.

Competition process



Step 1:

Proposal conception and development

There are two ways to participate:

- assemble existing connected learning content and experiences into one or more playlists that span and scale across organizations or institutions;
- augment existing connected learning programming with new connected learning resources and/or experiences that must be conceived of and sequenced as playlists that span and scale across organizations or institutions;

When developing proposals, consider:

Narrative

- What is the playlist theme and purpose? How does it connect to the lives of learners?
- Who is your learner audience? What types of experiences and resources will interest and engage them?
- What real world problems do you want learners to engage?
- How can you make the experience immersive by involving different collaborative partners?

Learning outcomes

- Does your playlist embody connected learning principles?
- What will the impact of your playlist be? How will it affect your learners?
- What is a meaningful result for the learners of completing the playlist? What opportunity does successful completion unlock?

Learning sequence

- What established connected learning experiences and resources will be leveraged in your playlist?
- How will you meaningfully sequence them? What information will learners need before engaging in each step?
- Does the playlist begin with engaging content that will draw the learner in?
- What's missing? What additional resources and/or learning experiences need to be developed and/or achieved through collaboration?

Collaborative/scaling opportunities

- What other programs can you collaborate with to increase playlist impact and audience?
- Do other resources and experiences already exist that could help you complete the playlist?
- Are there collaborative opportunities that could be leveraged to strengthen your playlist?
- How can you extend the reach of your playlist to engage a broader or more diverse youth audience?

Connected learning principles

- Does the complete playlist effectively embody connected learning principles?
- Does it achieve its intended serious learning outcomes?
- Does it invite users to follow their passions?
- Does your playlist open up further connected learning opportunities?

Digital badges

- What are the learning outcomes from the playlist or its experiences for which you want to offer a badge?
- What competencies, knowledge, skills, or attributes are being recognized?
- What is the required proof that must be submitted in order to earn a badge?
- What type of evaluation does the badge represent and how will it be assessed (i.e. self, peer, educator, expert, or system)?
- What comes next for learners earning this badge?
- What career or education opportunities might this badge unlock for the learner?



Step 2: Submit application

Final applications are due no later than May 13, 2016 at 5pm PST/8 pm EST.

Applications must be submitted through the online FastApps system and will require:

- an overview of the proposed playlist(s), including theme and learning objectives and outcomes;
- a rationale for the importance of the playlist(s) that takes into consideration DML Competition 6 criteria with an emphasis on how the playlist(s) will scale connected learning;
- a detailed description of all proposed playlist content and an indication of whether it is existing or to be developed with grant funds*;
- a team roster and division of responsibilities;
- budget and budget narrative;
- proposed development process and timeline;
- a description of local and/or global audiences currently served, and discussion of how this grant will enable you to broaden that reach;
- preliminary implementation and communication strategy, including a plan for engaging organizational stakeholders and audiences who will use the playlist; and
- an indication of how your proposal can be scaled.

**Limited funds will be awarded for new content creation. New content will only be funded in those instances where it is proposed in conjunction with a pre-existing connected learning program and is intended to augment existing learning resources or experiences.*

For further application details, please see the How To Apply page.



Step 3: Winners selection

A panel of expert, interdisciplinary judges will review all applications and select winners. The following criteria should guide the creation of proposals. Strong applications will engage meaningfully with as many of the following criteria as possible.

Successful applications will:

Design experiences for learners that

- focus more on passions, less on requirements;
- emphasize knowledge formation, not knowledge transfer;
- allow learners to choose their own learning paths;
- create opportunities for collaboration; and,
- promote discovery and unlock future opportunities.

Build learning communities and networks that

- provide opportunities for youth to learn through relationships with their peers;
- create meaningful interactions with a diverse community of mentors and experts;
- challenge youth to engage with people and perspectives unlike their own; and
- help youth develop their own identities and connect them with the identity of the community.

Empower learners by

- using digital media and technology as a means of self-expression;
- providing ways for them to publish the products of their learning;
- encouraging them to address real-world problems;
- allowing revision and improvement on their ideas over time; and
- employing them as playlist testers and co-designers.

Unlock opportunities by

- using each experience to move learners towards a specific new opportunity;
- illuminating how experiences might connect learners to future career and learning paths;
- imagining every learning experience as part of a bigger map of achievements; and
- highlighting the rewards and new opportunities unlocked by each accomplishment.

Validate learning with badges that

- define the knowledge, skills, or attributes being formed;
- explain the type of evaluation or assessment employed;
- clearly describe the proof or evidence that learners must submit;
- outline who (i.e. self, peer, educator, expert, or system) will be assessing the proof;
- indicate pathways through thematic playlists where applicable.

Applications will also be assessed on the following criteria:

Communication and implementation plan

- offers a realistic implementation strategy and plan for engaging learners; and
- includes a communications plan that allows for transparent documentation of playlist development process to foster public engagement and scalable learning opportunities

Plan and Budget

- proposes a realistic budget that accurately reflects the scope of work and includes allowable expenses per the Playlists for Learning Terms and Conditions.



Winning proposals will be selected by an expert panel of judges and announced in mid-summer 2016.

All DML Competition 6: Playlists for Learning winners will become part of the dynamic connected learning community, composed of thought-leaders, academics, practitioners, educators, designers, technologists, and media artists that are leading the transformation of curriculum design and learning for the connected age.

Winners will participate in a 9 month program designed to support successful project development. Winners will be networked with each other and more broadly into the connected learning community.

Winners will be asked to document the creation of their playlists and program outcomes in a public way. While organizations and individuals retain creative rights for work created in or for the program, participants will also be encouraged to document and share learning materials, media, and digital tools.

About the Digital Media and Learning Competition

The Digital Media and Learning Competition is a program designed to find and to inspire the most novel uses of new media in support of connected learning. Over the past eight years, the Competition has awarded over \$12 million to more than 100 projects — including games, mobile phone applications, virtual worlds, social networks, and digital badge platforms — that explore how technologies are changing the way people learn and participate in daily life. The Competition is supported by the [John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation](#) through a grant to the University of California, Irvine, and is administered by HASTAC.

The MacArthur Foundation

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation launched its more than \$200 million Digital Media and Learning initiative in 2006 to help determine how digital technologies are changing the way young people, learn, play, socialize, and participate in civic life. A new pedagogical approach, Connected Learning, emerged from these investments to become a framework for reimagining learning in the digital age.

In October 2015, MacArthur provided seed funding to launch [Collective Shift](#), the organization behind the new [LRNG](#) platform, to advance broad adoption of the principles, practices, and products of Connected Learning. The Digital Media and Learning Competition is supported by MacArthur as part of its commitment to advancing the field of digital media and learning.

Connected Learning

Connected Learning is a pedagogy for the digital age that has emerged as a result of more than 10 years of research and design experiments funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. By connecting the three spheres of a learner's life--academics, peer culture, and interests-- it makes learning relevant to all populations, to real life and real work, and to the realities of the digital age, where the demand for learning never stops. For more information, see [connectedlearning.tv](#).

HASTAC

[HASTAC](#) (Humanities, Arts, Science, Technology Alliance and Collaboratory; “haystack”) is an open alliance of more than 14,000 humanists, artists, social scientists, scientists and technologists working together to change the way we teach and learn. Since 2002, HASTAC has served as a community of connection where members share news, tools, research, insights, and projects to promote engaged learning for a global society. Issues of access and equality are as important to HASTAC's mission as the latest technological innovations; creative contribution is as important as critical thinking.

Infrastructure and administrative support for the Digital Media and Learning Competition is provided by HASTAC teams based at the [University of California Humanities Research Institute](#) and [Duke University](#) under the founding leadership of Cathy N. Davidson (The Graduate Center, CUNY, and Duke University) and David Theo Goldberg (Director, UCHRI) through a grant from the [John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation](#). Additional support for other HASTAC initiatives is provided by Duke University, the University of California Humanities Research Institute (UCHRI), the Graduate Center, City University of New York, the National Science Foundation, and other member institutions.

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