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Laurier faculty play games to hone teaching excellence

BRANTFORD – Saturday, April 2 will be a play day of sorts – with serious outcomes – for those who teach at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Members of the university's faculty, teaching staff and librarians will gather for a workshop on how to effectively incorporate games into their teaching practice. Professor Scott Nicholson, who has extensive experience designing games for corporate training and learning environments, will deliver a workshop titled *Games Beyond Screens in the Classroom*. The event is presented in collaboration with Laurier's Centre for Teaching Innovation and Excellence.

The workshop runs from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Laurier's downtown Brantford campus. It will focus on games in the physical world. Nicholson will facilitate a series of games with the attendees, and then debrief each example, exploring the ways in which the approaches may be applied to the participants' individual fields of study.

"There are huge opportunities for deepened student engagement in educational games played in the physical world," Nicholson said. "And unlike digital games which are pre-programmed, these physical-world games are highly adaptable, and can be modified on the fly to suit different topics, student needs or learning outcomes."

"This won't be a typical seminar where participants sit in chairs and take notes," said Nicholson. "The goal is to create a more playful, highly interactive learning environment where people are out of their seats and engaging with each other."

About 35 faculty members from across Laurier's campuses and faculties have registered for this event.

"We are pleased that so many of our faculty will be taking part in the opportunity to learn from Professor Nicholson's considerable expertise in the area of game-based learning, gamification and motivation techniques," said Shirley Hall, educational developer with the university's Centre for Teaching Innovation and Excellence. "I think it speaks to the dedication of our instructors and their desire to continually learn new and meaningful ways to effectively engage their students."

Professor Nicholson will be available for comment at noon on the day of the workshop during a break for participants. For more information about the BGNlab (Brantford Games Network) visit <http://bgnlab.ca> or contact Scott Nicholson at scott.nicholson@wlu.ca.