

OCTOBER 2015

TRF Newsletter

Catholic School Cohort Gains Insight during a “Sprint” through the Design Process

After hosting two introductory design-thinking events this past May, The Riordan Foundation was happy to once again partner with TrueSchool Studio to lead a cohort of teams representing ten Catholic schools through Sprint, an intensive, three-week program focusing on the design cycle for education.

Teams of 3-5 educators from Los Angeles County Catholic schools applied to participate in this opportunity by identifying an issue at their school and reflecting on why their past attempts to address it may not have succeeded. They also had to explain why each team member was selected and why they wanted to participate in the program. Accepted teams demonstrated a questioning, driven, and engaged mind-set as well as openness to the process.

Over the course of three in-person studios and three independent intersessions, accepted school teams completed an entire design cycle from opportunity identification and stakeholder interviews, to prototype creation, implementation, and refinement through feedback. At each stage, educators collaborated to create online portfolios documenting the process and illustrating the evolution of their ideas.

During this facilitated program, teams had additional support from dedicated mentors with experience in change management, as well as access to content-expert coaches who were selected based on team-identified areas for design opportunity. These individuals attended studios, provided resources, and checked in with schools during their independent intersession activities. In addition to mentors' important role as a sounding board for teams, they also served as cheerleaders for these educators who bravely stepped out of their comfort zones in the hopes of better serving their students.

The culminating event took place on October 1st and saw teams share their prototype solutions for issues ranging from positive school culture and teacher-student relationships, to parent engagement and student motivation. From here, these teams have the opportunity to continue on to Solutions, an in-depth, six-month fellowship to explore and test these designs at their schools.

We want to recognize the participating educators for their trust and hard work and thank the mentors and coaches for their support. We would also like to acknowledge the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation for partnering with The Riordan Foundation to make this opportunity possible. We are excited to see this innovative network grow and continue to design impactful experiences for students!



Educators from St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy build a prototype during Sprint Studio 2

Fall 2015 Calendar

October (Multiple Dates): Grant Awareness Sessions

November 4th: Last Online Awareness Session

November 7th: DIY Girls Teacher Workshop K-8

November 20th: RRMG Applications Due



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Program Evaluation Improves Instructional Innovation Grant Process

Here at The Riordan Foundation we believe in a process of continuous improvement; after every grant cycle or event we collect surveys to learn more about how educators experience our programs and how they would like to see them improved. For the first two years of the Instructional Innovation grant, however, we went even further and hired an outside firm to delve into the effectiveness of this program both in terms of impact and process.

Many of the recommendations of this evaluation will take time to implement; however, a few immediately-actionable items emerged. For example, in response to anxiety about the 50% challenge requirement, we are now applying a sliding scale based on student need. The study also showed that grantees wanted more structure in reporting requirements; as such, we created a template that will guide responses while respecting the great variance in projects funded. Our new application will also have a standard formatting for teams to present their goals and measures in order to better monitor potential impact.

For educators who are interested in learning more about the Instructional Innovation Grant and these improvements, we are hosting our annual online and in-person awareness sessions throughout the fall. Past attendees have reported that these opportunities to engage foundation staff and ask questions are extremely useful in understanding the program and requirements. A complete schedule and RSVP form can be found on our website at www.riordanfoundation.org.

We are excited for this opportunity to better serve students and educators and thank those involved for their thoughtful feedback.



Attendees of the October 6th Grant Awareness Session get a chance to ask questions about the 2015-16 Instructional Innovation Grant



Educators at the 2014 DIY Girls Teacher Workshop use Makey Makey Boards to turn ordinary objects into game controllers.

DIY Girls to Facilitate Additional Teacher Workshop

After receiving incredibly positive feedback about last year's event, The Riordan Foundation is once again excited to sponsor an event with DIY Girls!

Taking place on Saturday, November 7th, this workshop aims to help K-8th grade teachers integrate hands-on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) projects into their curriculum in order to engage students. In addition to receiving guidance directly from DIY Girls Founder Luz Rivas, each participant will leave with a kit of supplies for 30 students to complete 5 hands-on projects.

For more information and to register, visit www.riordanfoundation.org/diycgirls.html. Space is limited and no more than 2 teachers per school may attend. We had so much fun last year that we can't wait to share this amazing opportunity once again!

