

Dr. Patricia Dennis, Ed.D.

***Educational Technology Leader | School Library Media Specialist | STEAM Educator |
Researcher***

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EDUCATION

EdD in Educational Technology Leadership, New Jersey City University, NJ, 2026
Dissertation: School Libraries Leveled Up: Exploring New and Multiple Literacies

Doctoral Portfolio: <https://sites.google.com/view/patt-dennis>

M.A. in Educational Technology, New Jersey City University, NJ, 2023
School Library Media Specialist & STEM teacher track

M.A. in English Writing Studies, **Kean University**, NJ, 2020
Thesis: The Adventures of the Writing Process: Digitizing The Writing Process
Department Graduate Assistant

B.A. in English and Early Childhood Education, College of Saint Elizabeth, NJ, 2018
Minor in Studio Art

AREAS OF RESEARCH AND SPECIALIZATION

Educational technology leader, school library media specialist, STEAM educator, curriculum developer, and researcher specializing in AI literacy, emerging technologies, game-based learning, scholastic esports, school library media, and equitable access to technology-rich learning. Experienced in developing innovative learning experiences, leading interdisciplinary projects, supporting educator professional learning, and conducting community-centered research focused on new and multiple literacies.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY FOCUS

- AI-enabled learning and AI literacy in K–12 education
- Digital, media, and multiple literacies
- School library media programs and technology integration
- Game-based learning and scholastic esports
- Educator capacity-building and professional learning
- Community-based participatory action research
- Student engagement, attendance, and belonging
- Maker-centered and play-based learning
- Equity, access, and culturally responsive pedagogy
- Youth participatory action research
- STEAM education and interdisciplinary curriculum design
- Library media STEAM gaming labs
- Cross-cultural educational exchange and community partnerships

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- AI literacy and emerging technologies in education
- Educational technology leadership and integration
- School library media and library program development
- STEAM education and curriculum development
- Game-based learning and scholastic esports
- Minecraft Education, Fortnite, and Unreal Engine educational applications
- Maker-centered and play-based learning
- Digital, media, and multiple literacies
- Professional learning and educator capacity-building
- Equity, access, and culturally responsive pedagogy
- Youth participatory action research
- Community-based participatory action research
- Curriculum design and instructional innovation
- Student engagement and interdisciplinary learning
- Digital media production, podcasting, and stop-motion animation
- Technology-rich learning environments
- Community partnerships and cross-cultural educational exchange

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Director and Instructor, School Library Media Specialist Program

William Paterson University, Wayne, NJ | July 2026–Present

Courses: *c; School Library Media Specialists Selects Literature for the School-Age Child; Foundations of School Librarianship; Educational Theory and Teaching Methods for School Librarians*

STEAM Teacher

Vision Gifted Chinese Children, China | July 2026–August 2026

School Library Media Specialist

Forest Street Community School, Orange, NJ | August 2024–June 2026

Adjunct Professor

Kean University | August 2021–December 2025

Course: *English Composition*

School Library Media Specialist

Thirteenth Avenue Elementary School, Newark, NJ | August 2022–March 2023

Adjunct Professor

Saint Elizabeth University | June 2020–March 2023

Course: *First Year College Introduction*

STEAM Enrichment Educator and Curriculum Developer

New Jersey City University, Science Project, Jersey City, NJ | June 2024–August 2024

STEAM Teacher and District Technology Coordinator

Pride Academy Charter School | April 2023–June 2024

Education Technology Specialist

The WELL Program of New Brunswick Theological Seminary | March 2021–February 2023

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE & SCHOLARLY WORK

Co-Primary Investigator

Examining the Impact of Garden State Esports Participation on Student Attendance Rates in New Jersey Schools | June 2025–June 2028

Longitudinal research study examining how esports participation influences student engagement and attendance across diverse New Jersey school contexts. The study received Monmouth University Institutional Review Board approval.

Co-Primary Investigator

Co-Teachers: The Board Game | March 2025–March 2026

Collaborative research and design project examining game-based professional learning and co-teaching models. The project included original board-game development, conference presentations, and scholarly dissemination.

Doctoral Dissertation Researcher

School Libraries Leveled Up: Exploring New and Multiple Literacies | October 2025–May 2026

Qualitative study examining school library media specialist integration of new literacies, resource adequacy, maker-centered learning engagement, and technology barriers. Findings informed a shift from diagnostic research toward action-focused co-design and implementation.

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

Fulbright Finalist, Library Media STEAM Gaming Lab—South Africa | 2026–2027

Selected to establish and research a community library media STEAM gaming lab in Gauteng Province, South Africa. The project focuses on game-based learning, AI literacy, digital literacy, STEAM education, and community-driven participatory action research.

Executive Women New Jersey Graduate Merit Award Recipient | 2024

Received a \$2,500 graduate merit award recognizing academic achievement and professional leadership.

INVITE AI in K–12 Teacher Fellow | 2025

National fellowship focused on integrating artificial intelligence literacy into K–12 educational contexts. Received a \$1,500 travel stipend to participate in workshops at the Computer Science Teachers Association Annual Conference.

Polar STEAM Educator Fellow, Cohort III | February 2025–December 2025

Participated in field-based STEAM learning and developed projects connecting science, technology, creativity, and game-based learning.

Projects included:

- *Whale Wonders: A Minecraft Education Theme Park*
- *Diving Into Discovery: From Inner City Librarian to Ocean Explorer—A STEAM Adventure with Whales, Tech, and Creativity!*

NASEF Scholastic Fellow | August 2024–May 2025

National fellowship supporting scholastic esports integration and game-based learning in educational settings.

Games for Change Student Challenge Game Jam Grant Recipient | January–March 2025

Received a \$1,500 grant supporting student-centered game design and game-based learning.

Smithsonian Science Education Center Educator Intern | June 2025–February 2026

Participated in the Smithsonian Science Curriculum Development Internship for Educators, gaining experience with curriculum development processes, educational research, and collaborative guide development.

Smithsonian Education Center NESST Teacher Ambassador, Cohort II | 2024–2026

Take Action Global, Cohort 9 | September–October 2025

Participated in the LEGO Build the Change Institute, including classroom engagement, educator learning, and mini-lesson design.

Epic Educator Accelerator Fellow | July 2024

Completed professional learning focused on integrating Epic Games educational tools and Unreal Engine into K–12 learning.

Epic Games Education Team DonorsChoose Award | 2024–2025

Awarded \$600 in DonorsChoose funding in recognition of dedication to supporting students' learning through Unreal Engine and the Epic Games educational ecosystem.

Intel Skills for Innovation Silver Ambassador | March 2025–March 2026

The Global Teach Ag Network Educators Empowering Educators Cohort I | December 2024–September 2025

U-GAIN Reading National Leadership Cohort Member | April 2025–April 2026

Collaborated with educators, literacy leaders, and Science of Reading advisors to inform resources and events focused on AI and early literacy.

NASEF Farmcraft Connections Participant | October–December 2024

Garden State Esports Emerging Leaders, Cohort 2 | 2024

Garden State Esports Leader—Data Research and Conference Presentations | 2024–Present

Games for Change Game Plan Professional Development for STEM Educators | Fall 2023

Completed professional learning and modified the board game *A Game of Life: Active Citizen!* based on the United Nations Global Goals.

Games for Change Student Challenge Educator Credential | 2023–2024

Rosebud AI Level 1: Pioneer | 2024

International Game Developers Association Foundation, International Scholars Cohort | July–August 2024

The*gamehers Guardian Ambassador | 2024

LG Educator | 2023–Present

Games for Change Student Challenge Participant | September 2024–May 2025

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS & GUEST LECTURES

Virtual Guest Lecturer

University of Pretoria, South Africa | November 2026

“Exploring Scholastic Online Gaming and Esports: Skills, Strategies, and Careers in K–12 Spaces”

Virtual Presenter

THE 17TH ANNUAL WPU EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE | November 2026

“School Libraries as Equitable Gateways to Responsible AI Literacy”

Webinar Co-Presenter

Digital Promise + HP edWeb | September 2026

“AI Literacy for K–12 Teaching and Learning: Ask Us Anything”

Webinar Co-Presenter

Digital Promise + HP edWeb | September 2026

“AI Literacy for K–12 Teaching and Learning: Ask Us Anything”

Presenter

Montclair State University Next Gen Conference | August 2026

“Community, Play, Authenticity”

Panelist & Playground Presenter

ISTE| June 2026

“From Playful Learning Communities to Powerful Learning Systems”

“School Librarian Playground”

Presenter

International Media Literacy Research Symposium| June 2026

“School Libraries Leveled Up: Exploring New and Multiple Literacies”

Presenter

NJECC Conference| March 2026

“SEL & Media Literacy: Play2Grow Partnership in a School Library Media Center”

“Co-Teachers: The Board Game”

Guest Lecture with Dr. Dana Smerda-Mason

Teachers Apprentice Program at Kean Jersey City | March 2026

“AI 101”

Presenter

Inaugural Play, Interaction, and Learning Conference | March 2026

“School Libraries Leveled Up: Exploring New Literacies through Play, Interaction and Learning”

Presenter

Valid Gains Through Video Games| February 2026

Poster Session: “Esports & the Positive Impact on Student Attendance”

Presenter

Kean Jersey City Educational Technology Department Spring Webinar | February 2026

“School Libraries Leveled Up: Exploring New and Multiple Literacies”

Presenter

NJASL+NJLA Conference| February 2026

“School Libraries Leveled Up: Exploring New and Multiple Literacies”

Co-Author

AERA Annual Meeting | 2026

“Rich Conversations and Data from an Original Board Game on Co-Teaching”

Virtual Guest Lecturer

University of Pretoria, South Africa | November 2025

“Exploring Scholastic Online Gaming and Esports: Skills, Strategies, and Careers in K–12 Spaces”

Presenter and Researcher

Serious Play Esports Summit, Rochester, NY | August 2025

“Garden State Esports’ Impact on Student Attendance”

Also hosted an Epic Game Zone in collaboration with Epic Games Education, Cleverlike Studios, and UNCG Esports.

Panelist

Games for Change Festival, New York, NY | June 2025

“The Power of Play in Informal Learning”

Co-Presenter

ISTE LIVE 25 | June 2025

“Exploring Science: Playful Adventures with 2nd Grade Innovators”

Virtual Presenter

Epic Secondary Educator Summit | May 2025

“Epic Games Tools in School Libraries”

Presenter and Co-Primary Investigator

New Jersey Educational Computing Cooperative Conference | March 2025

“Exploring Science: Playful Adventures with 2nd Grade Innovators”

“Co-Teachers: The Board Game”

Virtual Presenter and Co-Host

Intel Skills for Innovation, Epic Games, and Unreal Engine Event | March 2025

“Gamify Your Classroom: Intel Skills for Innovation + Epic Games + Unreal Engine”

Presenter

The Fab Educators Summit | January 2025

“Integrating Minecraft Education in K–2 Classrooms for Creative Holiday Projects”

Co-Presenter

Northeastern Distance Education Conference | November 2024

“Innovating Nursing Education with Game-Based Learning: A Leadership Vision in E-Learning Development”

Presenter

NJCU Educational Technology Department Fall Webinar | October 2024

“Unleashing the Power of AI in Education through Minecraft: A Live Gaming Session”

Presenter

Garden State Esports Winter Championship | 2025

“Bridging K–12 and Higher Education Nursing Education through Game-Based Learning with LEGO Fortnite: A School Library Initiative”

Presenter

Valid Gains Through Video Games Conference | February 2025

“Bridging K–12 and Higher Education Nursing Education through Game-Based Learning with LEGO Fortnite: A School Library Initiative”

Co-Host and GSE Leadership Representative

Districts of the Oranges Esports Summit | February 2025

Invited Speaker

Global Teach Ag Network Catalyzing Week Livestream | February 2025

“Sharing FarmCraft Coaching Season Experiences”

Research Pavilion Lead

Garden State Esports Fall Finals, Georgian Court University | November 2024

Poster Presenter

Garden State Esports Leadership Summit, Georgian Court University | November 2024

“Fall 2024 Season—Empowering Voices: Unveiling Marginalized Narratives in Garden State Esports”

Presenter

NJCU Educational Technology Department Webinar | February 2024

“Empowering Student Voices: Integrating Stop-Motion Animation with Google Drawing, Canva, and CapCut”

Presenter

NJCU EdTech Winter Webinar | February 2024

“Empowering Student Voices: Integrating Stop-Motion Animation with Google Drawing, Canva, and CapCut”

Panelist

New Jersey Association of School Librarians Conference | December 2023

Presenter

NAMLE Conference | July 2024

“The Next Global Game Changers: Podcasting Learner’s Rhetoric”

Presenter

ISTELive 24 | June 2024

“The Next Global Game Changers: Podcasting Learner’s Rhetoric”

Presenter

OTESSA Conference | June 2024

“Sustaining Positive Change: Empowering Student Voices: Integrating Stop-Motion Animation with Google Drawing, Canva, and CapCut”

Presenter

2024 Global Impact Conference | April 2024

“Girls Who Code and Game: Building Sisterhood through Impactful Gameplay and Design!”

Presenter

New Jersey Educational Computing Cooperative Annual Educational Technology Conference
| March 2024

“Empowering Student Voices: Integrating Stop-Motion Animation with Google Drawing,
Canva, and CapCut”

“Microlearning, Micro-Credentials, and E-Learning: Reimagining Self-Paced Professional
Development”

Guest Speaker

C.I.R.C.L.E. Learning Group, Inc. | February 2024

“How to Become a Digital Artist and the Impact of Identity in the Field”

Co-Presenter

NJCU Alumni Game Night | June 2024

“Co-Teachers: The Board Game”

Presenter

Garden State Esports Fall Finals | November 2024

Presented research and supported student-centered esports programming.

Virtual Co-Host

Digital Promise #LevelUpEDU Chat | 2024–2025

“Play Together, Learn Together”

Co-Presenter

Games 4 Change and Epic Games Education Event | 2025

Presented on game-based learning, classroom creativity, and industry-supported educational
tools.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS & SERVICE

Advisory Committee Member

Global Game Jam Next | October 2025–Present

Support an education-focused committee dedicated to expanding video game creation opportunities for middle and high school students.

Minecraft Education Ambassador and Sponsor | 2024–Present

Minecraft Student Ambassador | October 2024

Garden State Esports Leadership Representative | 2024–Present

Support scholastic esports development, student engagement, research, and conference programming throughout New Jersey.

Girls Who Code Club Leader

Pride Academy Charter School | Established 2024

Co-Founder

Girls Who Game Esports Team | Established 2024

LG Educator | 2023–Present

Support technology use to improve student learning and educational experiences.

WeAreGutsy Volunteer Social Media and Content Creator | May 2024–Present

Volunteer Instructional Designer and UX Intern

New Jersey Coalition of Inclusive Education | February 2024–Present

Collaborated with cohort members and NJCIE staff to develop instructional videos on inclusive education. Provided creative and technical support while implementing NJCIE's nationally recognized inclusion model. Content was developed for use by the New Jersey Department of Education and other educational communities.

Volunteer

NJCU Educational Technology Department | November 2023

Supported the department during NJEA 2023.

Volunteer and Event Support

Garden State Esports Spring Championship | May 2024

Supported Super Smash Bros. and Overcooked tournament activities.

Co-Host

Digital Promise #LevelUpEDU Chat | 2024–2025

Co-hosted a professional learning discussion focused on play, learning, and educational technology.

Games for Change Educator and Student Challenge Participant | 2023–2025

International Game Developers Association Foundation Participant | 2024

The*gamehers Guardian Ambassador | 2024

Global Agriculture Literacy Network Contributor | 2024–2025

NASEF Farmcraft Participant and Leader | 2024

Garden State Esports Research and Conference Presenter | 2024–Present

INJAZ Volunteer Content Creator | 2023

Created digital media content related to podcasting, vlogging, and the engineering design process.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CSTA 2025 Annual Conference

Cleveland, Ohio | July 7–11, 2025

Selected sessions and workshops included:

- Level Up: Computational Thinking Game Night
- Empowering Learners through Physical Computing with LEGO Education
- Data Storytelling: Combining Narrative Skills with Computer Science and Data Visualizations
- Empowering Middle School Students with AI Skills and Knowledge
- AI Foundations in Minecraft: Building Essential Skills
- From Numbers to Stories: Creating Visualizations with Introductory Python and R

Coding for Climate: LEGO Fortnite Odyssey Educator Workshop

Virtual | April 2025

Unreal Educator Accelerator Program

Epic Games | August 2024

Completed a five-day professional development program focused on using Unreal Engine in the classroom.

Epic Online Secondary Educator Summit

Virtual | February 2024

Minecraft 101: Crafting a Game-Based Learning Classroom

Virtual | August 2024

Minecraft Student Ambassador Training

Virtual | October 2024

Rosebud AI Game Design Bootcamp for Educators

August 2024

Research in Esports and Gaming Webinar

August 2024

IGDA and GameJamPlus: Engaging Your Community in GameJamPlus

Virtual | August 2024

Education Summit—UEFN for Transmedia

Virtual | June 2024

SITHub: Introduction to Unreal Editor for Fortnite

Virtual | May 2024

Girls Make Games Educator Workshop

Virtual | February 2024

NJECC Annual Educational Technology Conference: A New eRAI for Learning

March 2024

Cybersecurity, Online Safety, Gaming, and Sextortion Workshop with the FBI

Montclair State University | September 2024

Intel Skills for Innovation and Epic Games: Rube Goldberg Contest Launch

Virtual | October 2024

5 Best Practices for Game-Based Teaching

Virtual | October 2024

Games 4 Change Level Up Series: Building the World of a Game with Iron Galaxy Studios

Virtual | January 2024

Games 4 Change Game Plan Professional Development for STEM Educators

Fall 2023

Certificate and Credential Highlights

- G4C Student Challenge Educator Credential
- Polar STEAM Educator Fellowship
- NASEF Scholastic Fellowship
- Epic Educator Accelerator Fellowship
- Minecraft Education Ambassador training
- Minecraft Student Ambassador training

- Rosebud AI Level 1: Pioneer
- Smithsonian Education Center NESST Teacher Ambassador participation
- CSTA professional learning participation
- Unreal Educator Accelerator completion

PUBLICATIONS & PROJECTS

White Paper for ASUS ROG Ally Devices | 2024

Developed and submitted a white paper that resulted in the donation of two ASUS ROG Ally devices for educational use.

A Perfect Day with Rube and Jennifer

Award recipient, Engineering a Story Lesson Plan Competition, Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education.

Co-Teachers: The Board Game

Co-created an original board game exploring co-teaching, collaboration, and professional learning. The project was presented at educational technology and research conferences.

Library Media STEAM Gaming Lab—South Africa

Developed a Fulbright research proposal for a community-driven library media STEAM gaming lab in South Africa. The proposed project integrates game-based STEAM learning, AI literacy, digital literacy, esports, 3D printing, virtual reality, digital badges, and participatory action research.

Whale Wonders: A Minecraft Education Theme Park

Developed as part of the Polar STEAM Educator Fellowship.

Diving Into Discovery: From Inner City Librarian to Ocean Explorer

Developed a STEAM learning project connecting whales, technology, creativity, and exploration.

Beneficial Bugs and Pollinator Pathways Day

Co-hosted through the Global Teach Ag Network.

FarmCraft Educational Programming

Participated in FarmCraft coaching, presentations, and educator engagement activities through Garden State Esports and the Global Teach Ag Network.

Inclusive Education Instructional Video Series

Contributed instructional design, user experience, creative, and technical support to a series of videos developed with the New Jersey Coalition of Inclusive Education.

Stop-Motion Animation and Digital Storytelling Projects

Designed learning experiences integrating Google Drawing, Canva, CapCut, podcasting, and digital media production to empower student voice.