Faculty Development Series: Using Second Life for Teaching & Learning

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Topic outline

Module 1: Introduction

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Welcome to the Second Life (SL) workshop. While virtual worlds provide many educational benefits, the two strongest benefits are the immersive environment coupled with social interactions. Virtual worlds hold the promise of an immersive environment containing problems and contexts similar to the real world (Dede, Clark, Ketelhut, Nelson, and Bowman, 2005). In addition, multi-user virtual worlds allow users to meet, interact, and form social communities. While either immersive environments or social interactions can provide for good learning experiences, in multi-user virtual worlds the natural coupling of these two possibilities may be what multi-user virtual worlds do best.

This 8 module, self-paced course, will teach you how to navigate the virtual environment, assist you in exploring educational simulations (sims), and provide examples of how SL can be integrated into teaching practices. The workshop content is divided into the following modules:

1. Introduction
2. Customizing Your Avatar & Getting Around

Resources

- Linden Lab's EDUSCAPE Blog
- RezEd
- Second Life in Education wiki - focused on cool examples of education projects in SL
- Second Life Grid
- Second Life Researchers List - focused specifically on research issues in Second Life
- SimTeach Second Life wiki
- SLED Blog
- Art Galleries of SL : This site lists over 600 SL based art galleries, and provides SL URLs for most of them, plus links to associated web sites when available.

3. Communicating in SL
4. Navigating SL
5. Using Gestures & Animations
6. Building Basics
7. Teaching in SL
8. Discipline Specific Learning Activities

As you will notice each module contains a series of steps that will take between 15 and 45 minutes to complete. This design will hopefully allow you to complete the items when you have small windows of opportunity available instead of waiting until a large block of time is available to work on the assignments. All of the activities will start and in many cases be completed on UAA's island which is located at http://slurl.com/secondlife/Teaching%2014/213/164/37. Most of the resources required to complete the modules can be found in your avatars inventory or in the "virtual wiki" located in the sandbox on UAA island. Instructions for how to retrieve items from, and add items to the wiki will be found in the learning units.

The first two modules are available for you to start this adventure. Starting October 29th a new module will be made available each week. Although the materials will be released over 8 consecutive weeks, you are not required to complete the workshop within that time period, but we do encourage you to find others in the course, and where possible complete activities together (more on how to do this will be presented in module 3).

If you have questions or require additional assistance, feel free to contact one of us in SL or real-life. Our avatar names and emails are:

- Jojo Mrigesh (JoAnn Gonzalez-Major), email = anjrg1@uaa.alaska.edu
- aldark Nightfire (Amanda Albright), email = anala2@uaa.alaska.edu

You can IM us in world or email us in real life.

Recommended Books

- Learning & Teaching in the Virtual World of Second Life, Molka-Danielsen, and Deutschmann - ISBN: 8251923530

- The Second Life Grid: The Official Guide to Communication, Collaboration, and Community Engagement, Rufer-Bach - ISBN: 0470412917

Activities

Review the following materials, then complete the activity at the bottom of this section.

Step 1: Review the "Advantages of Using Virtual Worlds for Education"
Step 2: Review "General Educational Uses of Second Life"
Step 3: Get your account setup
Adventurer List and Forum
Optional: Review the Second Life Terms Directory

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Many of the galleries are ranked (on a scale of 1 to 5 stars).
- SLHealthy Wiki, - this resource gathers information about consumer health locations and groups in Second Life
- The Museum of Philosophy : Explore ideas through their Philosophers.

SL Feeds

Add/Edit Feeds
SLED Blog
Virtual Worlds Best Practice in Education Event!

Linden Prize Applications Due Jan. 15, 2009

Year in Review Brag-Fest!

President Elect Obama Appoints Two SL Innovators to his Team!

Nudging the Adoption

Museum Virtual Worlds
Encoding Tools for Live Webcasting into Virtual Worlds

NASA Virtual Worlds and

Module 2:Customizing Your Avatar & Getting Around

In this module we will be concentrating on customizing your avatar and learning how to sit, walk, and fly without going "splat" when landing. To master these skills we would like you to complete the activities listed below.

At the end of two of the activities there are short blogging assignments that we would like you to complete. Both assignments require that you complete selected activities in SL and then reflect on the experience in the "Being Different Experience" blog located at the end of this unit. If possible, you may want to complete the SL activities with one of your peers taking this workshop.

Activities

📄 Step 1: Changing Your Appearance

📄 Step 2: Changing and Modifying Clothing

📄 Step 3: Managing Your Inventory Part 1

📄 Step 4: Walking, Flying, Sitting, and Viewing Your Environment

➡️ Module 2 Assignment: Being "different" Experience

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Module 3: Communicating in SL

One of the great things about Second Life is that you can experience it with other people. It is not just a graphically-rich 3D environment; it is also a social network, like MySpace or Facebook. What do you do when you meet someone you would like to get to know?

In this module, you will learn how to befriend people and give them privileges that will allow them to contact you more easily, talk in world, create profiles that share information with others an join and create groups of avatars that share similar interests.

Activities

📄 Step 1: Making Friends in SL

📄 Step 2: Chatting & Instant Messaging

📄 Step 3: Talking in SL

📄 Step 4: Creating Profiles and Snapshots

📄 Step 5: Joining & Creating Groups

👥 Module 3 Assignment: Chatting in SL forum

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Module 4: Navigating SL

Overview

The second quarter report on Second Life for 2009 indicates that there are almost 25,000 islands in Second Life visited by upwards of 80,000 visitors daily. If we look at visitorship in May 2009, the monthly repeat logins into

Immersive Environments Report

Phase Three of the VHOS Project

Virtual Worlds at the New York Hall of Science

Taxonomy of Virtual Worlds for Education

Source site...

Second Life reached over 750,000 visitors; up significantly from May 2006 when the monthly repeat logins totaled only 55,000.

It is unlikely that anyone, except maybe the Lindens, will ever visit every island in Second Life. One reason for this statement is related to how quickly Second Life is growing. The report mentioned above indicated that "resident owned land was up11% from last year". The other is that there are many private islands which can only be visited by those who own the island or belong to the group with permissions to enter the island.

In this module we will focus on the skills needed to travel through the virtual space that is Second Life.Built in tools such as the World Map, Mini-map, Search, and Landmarks will help you teleport within SL to explore new places, attend events, meet new people, shop, and build your inventory.We will use all of these tools in this module.

Important Note: Before you begin this module, you will also need to go to the Build Space on UAA island to acquire the Module 4 resources required to complete these activities.Please make sure you've completed modules 2 - 3 as you will need skills developed in these modules to accomplish some of these activities.

Activities

📄 Step 1: Setting UAA Island as your Home
📄 Step 2: Using the World Map
📄 Step 3: Teleporting from the World Map
📄 Step 4: Using the Mini-Map
📄 Step 5: Acquiring and Organizing Inventory
📄 Step 6: Searching Second Life
📄 Step 7: Creating Landmarks and Returning Home
📄 Module 4: Assignment
📄 Just for Fun -Science Friday in SL

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Module 5: Using Animations, Gestures, Attachments, and Snapshots

Overview

Using gestures and animations makes your avatar seem a bit more "real" in its expressions and actions. Attachments are objects that are either static and move with the avatar or active and control the avatar. Snapshots allow you to capture images of your avatar within SL.

While it would appear that animations and gestures are the same they function differently. So what is the difference between an animation and a gesture?

Animations	Gestures
• Avatars that are using a variety of complicated actions are likely using animations. • Animations instruct an avatar	• Gestures combine and sequence a variety of actions such as sounds, chat, and animations.

to perform a set of motions.
- Animations are independent movements typically programmed in third party tools outside of SL or via complex scripting language in SL.
- Animations are often included in/on items thus animating your avatar to perform certain tasks.

- Gestures must be activated before they can be used
- Gestures are typically triggered by a text entry or keystroke.

The following activities will introduce you to using Animations, Attachments, Gestures, and Snapshots.

Activities

📄 Step 1: Animations
📄 Step 2: Initiating and Creating Gestures
📄 Gesture Assignment: Build Your Own Gesture
📄 Step 3:Taking Snapshots
🖌 Snapshot Assignment: Oh the Places You Can Go!!

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Module 6: Building Basics

Overview

Narrative

Activities

- Introduction to Building (mod 2, pp 27-40)
- Playing with Shapes (mod 3, pp 2-17)
- Introduction to Textures (mod 3, pp 2-17)
- Building Features (mod 4, pp 2-14)
- Beyond Basic Textures (mod 4, pp 43-55)
- Power Building (mod 5, pp 9-20)
- About Land (mod 8, pp 26-34)

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Module 7: Teaching in SL

Within Second Life itself, many educational projects are underway. They can be classified as follows:

- Virtual Field Trips, Museums, and Replicas of Real-

life Places – The NASA Space museum is one example. Real-life places may be exact or augmented in some way. The Glidden Campus in Second Life is an example of an augmented copy of a real campus. Second Louvre Museum is a replication of a of the Louvre in Paris where participants can experience both the art and the culture of the place. Many of these use active and collaborative learning processes as part of the educational experience.

- Simulations of Real-life Experiences – Virtual medical clinics are one example of this.

- Experimental ecologies – For example the Svarga (http://slurl.com/secondlife/Svarga/128.0/128.0) is a functional ecosystem with a simulated weather system.

- Information Repositories – The Information and Communication Library, a storehouse of educational happenings in Second Life.

- New Media Research – Using Second Life to explore our changing cultures and identities.

When considering the use of Second Life or any other virtual world for education, the following factors should be examined:

📄 The New World for the Instructor
📄 Preparation Tips and Tricks
📄 Establish In-world Etiquette
📄 Assessing In-world Activities
📄 Create Learning Spaces and Communities
📄 Understand Software and Hardware Requirments

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Module 8: Discipline-specific Learning Activities

Conklin (2005) lists discipline-specific activities for which Second Life or any virtual world could be used. The Information and Communication Library in Second Life itself also lists many of the same activities.

📄 Business
📄 Economics
📄 Health Care
📄 Humanities

📄 Political Science
📄 Psychology
📄 Sciences
📄 Social Sciences

Activities

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Help & Other Resources

🌐 SoftTutor Interactive Tutorial for SL

📄 Disability Support Resources for Second Life

Additional Resources

The following Internet links provide information on using Second Life for educational purposes.

- Linden Lab's EDUSCAPE Blog
- Second Life in Education wiki - focused on cool examples of education projects in SL
- Second Life Grid
- Second Life Researchers List - focused specifically on research issues in Second Life
- SimTeach Second Life wiki
- SLED Blog
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- The Museum of Philosophy : Explore ideas through their Philosophers.

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