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Annotated Bibliography of Research on Virtual World Teaching

Adam K. Halemano, Jr.

ETEC/652D Computer Authoring Virtual Realty

Dr. Peter Leong

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Braman, J. & Wang, J. (2009). Extending the classroom through second life. *Journal of*
Information Systems Education. **20(2), 235-247. Retrieved from**
http://www.jise.appstate.edu/index.htm

At the time of this publication, James Braman and Dr. Yuanqiong Wang were active
faculty members at Towson University in Baltimore, Maryland. Through collaborative
effort, a comprehensive series of studies were conducted as a means of exploring the
potential advantages and disadvantages of multi-user virtual environments (MUVE) as an
effective didactic tool within the classroom setting. The digital backdrop for this case
study was Linden Lab's popular "Second Life" MUVE. The comprehensive investigative
research was conducted over a two year period consisting of three pilot trials and two
main studies that seeked to address three primary questions relating to benefits, adoption,
and design of Second Life (SL) learning activities.

Braman and Wang's series of studies provide a fascinating and convincing look at the
prevailing potential for MUVEs as a supplement to face-to-face classroom instruction.
The research methodologies utilized within this case study presents both qualitative and
quantitative results via Likert-based surveys and instructional observation. Despite the
study's methodical coverage of important analytical factors that address the issue of
student performance within the context of 3-D virtual enviornments, the final assertion
that "further testing is required" lends credence to the fact that the use of MUVEs as an
instructional tool is still in its infancy. On the whole, this case study was very thorough
and would serve well as an excellent information template for individuals interested in
pursuing future case studies on the subject of 3-D multi-user virtual environments.

Cooke-Plagwitz, J. (2008). New directions in CALL: An objective introduction to second
life. *CALICO Journal, 25***(3), 547-557. Retrieved from**
https://calico.org/memberBrowse.php?action=article&id=716

Jessamine Cooke-Plagwitz is an Assistant Professor at North Illinois University. As an
active instructor of German language within the Department of Foreign Languages and
Literatures, Cooke-Plagwitz utilizes a technology-enhanced constructivist approach to

learning within online MUVE environments. The focus of this article is primarily geared toward features and benefits associated with foreign language instruction within the 3-D MUVE known as Second Life (SL). Cooke-Plagwitz offers a perspective on collaborative learning that speaks toward the need and use of virtual avatars as a means of bridging and encouraging meaningful communication between foreign language students.

While this article consists mainly of secondary source material, Cooke-Plagwitz does an exemplary job connecting and illustrating a number of beneficial communicative features that cater to foreign language students within the SL environment. In addition to pointing out important benefits associated with lingquistic immersion, cultural proficiency, and user safety (privacy and anonymity), the article also addresses a few pitfalls associated with user fees, hardware requirements, and unacceptable forms of social behavior from fellow residents within the SL environment. Overall, the author manages to successfully frame 3-D MUVEs as a highly useful pedagogic tool for foreign language instruction.

Kamel-Boulos, M. N., Hetherington, L. & Wheeler, S. (2007). Second life: An overview of the potential of 3-D virtual worlds in medical and health education. *Health Information and Libraries Journal, 46*(4), 233-245. DOI: 10.1111/j.1471-1842.2007.00733.x

This well-written review-case study is a collaborative effort penned by three academic individuals from the University of Plymouth over in the United Kingdom . The intent for this editorial piece is to discuss the positive and negative findings of recent studies aimed at addressing medical and health related forms of education within 3-D multi-user virtual environments (MUVE). The article is as much a social commentary as it is a revealing case study on 3-D virtual worlds. According to the authors, the implications for use of MUVEs as a pedagogical tool within the medical industry is deemed worthy of attention, evaluation, and reflection.

The authors are successful at utilizing an adequate pool of secondary resources that help to convey both prudence and importance when implementing policy and practice within an MUVE-based curriculum. From an organizational standpoint, the article is broken

down into clear and detailed sections that help to provide the reader with a fundamental understanding of MUVEs while framing the online platform's purpose as an effective didactic tool. Within the context of pedagogical potential, the Health Info Island and VNEC (Virtual Neurological Education Centre) studies play key roles in demonstrating and providing virtual vistors with an immersive and interactive educational experience. Without the use of sound empiracle data in the form of charts, graphs, and tables, the substantive aspect of this article is limited to qualitative observational assessments.

Jarmon, L. & Sanchez, J. (2008). The educators coop experience in second life: A model for collaboration. *Journal of the Research Center for Educational Technology (RCET), 4*(2), 66-82. **Retreived from http://www.doaj.org/doaj?func=openurl&genre=article &issn=1948075X&date=2008&volume=4&issue=2&spage=66**

Dr. Leslie Jarmon and PhD graduate student Joe Sanchez both hail from the University of Texas at Austin. With a background in communications, Dr. Jarmon is co-founder of the Educators Coop Research Project conducted within the multi-user virtual environment (MUVE) known as Second Life (SL). With a focus on examining collaborative efforts among educators within the SL virtual community, Jarmon and Sanchez's purpose for their ongoing case study seeks to validate the premise that multiple academic principles can be effectively taught within this online virtual model. Through the use of a unique residential environment, where educators are able to cohabit as neighbors within a virtual community area, the Educator Coop Research Project push the envelop of collaborative interaction by blurring the lines of promixity and interactive pedagogy.

This case study article presents an empirical view of the topic and provides a foundation for implementing learning activities within 3-D MUVEs. The study consisted of surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews. With the use of Likert-type scale questions, participants are able to provide meaningful feedback regarding their experiencings and impressions (both positive and negative) during the study. What makes this case study particularly fascinating is the project researcher's use of the virtual platform to conduct and collect quantitative data for the study. While the results proved to be overwhelmingly

positive, participants of the case study did express concerns that address acceptance and adoption of this new online modale.

Collins, C. M. & Jennings, N. A. (2007). Virtually or virtual U: Educational institutions in second life. *International Journal of Human Social Sciences*, *2*(3), 180-186. Retrieved from http://www.docstoc.com/docs/39823492/Virtual-or-Virtually-U-Educational-Institutions-in-Second-Life

Chris Collins is an IT Analyst at the Instructional & Research Computing department at the University of Cincinatti. Dr. Nancy Jennings is an Associate Professor and Director of the Children's Education and Entertainment Research (CHEER) lab at the University of Cincinatti. Dr. Nancy Jennings is also a well-respected author of many technical and communications-based publications within the field of education. The purpose of this observational case study is to examine 170 accredited educational institutions that have established virtual learning environments within Linden Lab's Second Life (SL). In addition to providing indepth background of this new instructional trend in education, the literature review conducted by previous case studies were very thorough in evaluating the the adoption rate (characteristics of early adopters) from SL's public release in 2003 to the fall of 2006.

Despite the report's thoroughness, the results from this empiracle study lacked the level of appeal that would drive an article's interest factor. Much of the data gleaned from the survey study revolved around virtual land use and descriptive illustration of different educational land sites (virtual locations). The most fascinating part of this study was the breakdown of institutions based on physical locations around the globe. While it was not surprising to learn that the United States had the most online educational institutions out of the 170 in Second Life (68.8%, n=117), this figure does reflect the leadership that U.S. educators have taken with regard to pushing the virtual envelope in education. As the article suggests, the idea of a "pedagogical utopia" offers hope that early adopters and

innovators will aid in uncovering viable benefits (and limitations) that will lead to greater educational endeavors. There is much to be said about this progressive assertion.