

Teaching and Learning in Second Life

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In an era where University enrolments are increasing without an attendant increase (and sometimes a reduction) in human and physical resources, innovative teaching practices move from being pedagogical experiments to institutional necessities. In this best practices paper, the authors share their learnings from two years of delivering a final year undergraduate subject, Digital Selves, entirely in the virtual world, Second Life. The session will focus on two of the key aspects of running successful inworld classes: ensuring that students are proficient and confident residents of Second Life; and planning and managing engaging inworld classes. One of the biggest points of resistance to teaching and learning in virtual worlds is the perception that it is difficult, highly technical and involves a long and steep learning curve. The authors will present a model Proficiency Exercise that helps students to quickly become comfortable in their new environment and their new 'skin.' This will be followed by an discussion of inworld teaching and learning strategies designed to maximise student engagement and satisfaction.