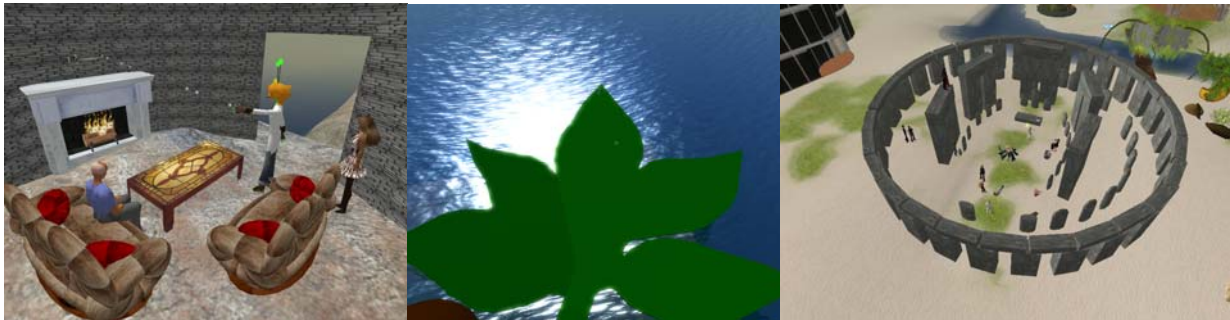


The Educational Potential of Second Life

–Version II–



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A.1) Introduction to the Second Version

In fall 2006 I wrote a paper on Second Life and Education which explored the various negative and positive aspects of the program from the point of view of the educator. While many of those ideas are still relevant, Second Life has changed greatly in the past year and a half, and a fresh assessment is called for. In particular, many of the negative aspects that I pointed out in my first paper have been addressed by Linden Labs, which has made the program a more valuable platform for education. The metaverse still contains a large seedy population, and adult themed islands still make up a large percentage of the universe, but these problems have been largely mitigated through a few advancements. Gambling has been banned since 2006, and an age verification system is being put in place that will restrict access to adult content to those that have proven their age. On the communication side, voice chat is now commonly used and has proven to be a valuable educational tool. Finally, the population of Second Life has skyrocketed to numbers that were not imaginable when I first wrote about the platform. For these reasons I am updating my previous paper with new discussion, content, links, and educational ideas. I have also added a small section on the social side of Second Life, and how to meet people and become involved. My goal is that both the new reader and the old user will find valuable information in the pages that follow.

A.2) General Introduction

Released to the public in 2003 by San Francisco based Linden Lab, Second Life (a MUVE, or Multi-user virtual environment) is an ever-growing virtual playground that is limited only by the creativity of its users. On October 18, 2006, the population of Second Life reached one million registered users, and now the total number of avatars (a user's persona in the virtual world) sits at over 15 million. This figure is a bit misleading, however, as the number of active

avatars, those that have signed on in the past 60 days, is currently around 1.3 million. At any given time there are around 50 to 60 thousand concurrent users, a number that is much higher than one year ago. These figures indicate that interest in Second Life continues to be high, but the number of users that actually stick around is growing at a much slower pace. Around 85% of those that have at one point signed on have not recently returned.

The economy in Second Life is strong and continues to perform well. The currency, Linden Dollars, are bought and sold for real US dollars. A year ago around \$500,000 (US Dollars) a day was changing hands. Now, anywhere between \$1,500,000 to \$2,000,000 is spent each day on everything from virtual houses to clothing. Furthermore, the attention that Second Life receives in the media is steadily growing, causing the platform's popularity to increase even more. CBS's crime drama *CSI* aired an episode in late 2007 based around a murder in Second Life, and now the show has multiple islands for avatars to explore and engage with other fans. Second Life also appeared in NBC's comedy *The Office*, when a character was lampooned for his participation in the program (and he then went on to create his "second life's Second Life"). Cnn.com has added a section devoted entirely to news taking place in Second Life.

This amount of attention demonstrates that the virtual world is becoming more and more ingrained in our culture, and more and more people are exploring its possibilities. Subsequently, interest among educators has continued to rise as more universities are signing on to build their virtual campuses (including here at The Ohio State University).

This short study explores the educational possibilities of Second Life. The research conducted for this work was part of a Graduate Assistantship for The Digital Union at The Ohio State University. I have been actively researching education and Second Life since fall 2006 and have also begun to research the social and cultural ramifications of the metaverse. This essay is meant to replace one I wrote in December of 2006, since due to the many changes that have taken place the older paper has become in many ways obsolete. Despite my efforts, this paper will still undoubtedly be out of date almost immediately, so the reader is encouraged to explore the links listed at the end of this paper to get a feel for how educational thought on Second Life is changing. The ideas generated from this study are aimed mostly at higher education, but the general concepts should transfer well to other educational levels.

If the reader is interested in Second Life and would like to explore these educational locations, free accounts may be activated at www.secondlife.com. Once an account is established and an avatar created, readers can explore the "Slurls" at the end this paper, which when clicked will instantly teleport the avatar to a specific location in Second Life.

B) The Positive Aspects of Second Life

In my last writing on Second Life I began by exploring the negative elements of Second Life. This was done largely for two reasons. First, the press that Second Life was receiving at the time was almost all glowingly positive and I believed that there were very important negative issues that were being ignored. This has largely changed and Second Life seems to currently receive more negative press than positive, likely because expectations had originally been placed too high. Secondly, I had also felt that the negative aspects might very well have outweighed the positive, therefore I decided to present that information first. Due to recent developments in the

program, however, I no longer feel that way and am now firmly convinced that Second Life can and will be a valuable tool for any educator willing to take a bit of a risk.

What follows are general characteristics of Second Life that will prove most advantageous for the educator:

1) The only limit in Second Life is one's own creativity

This is far and away the best thing about Second Life. People can and do just about anything in Second Life, albeit with a decent amount of tech experience, and more importantly, a lot of patience. But the fact remains that almost anything can be done in this system, and almost always much more cheaply and easily than in the real world.

- Architects can build virtual structures and explore their possibilities without actually having to build anything.
- Business owners can try out a new business model in a relatively safe environment (although there are certainly some differences between the economy in Second Life and real life).
- City planners can plan virtual cities before hiring a construction crew or pouring any concrete.
- Philosophers (or anyone for that matter) can hold conversations with people from all over the world.

Just walking around Second Life, one can be amazed at all the things people insert into their virtual world: impressive art works, lovely outdoor scenery, or ridiculously huge shopping malls, just to name a few.

2) Second Life provides a low risk environment

The other main appeal of Second Life is that all these things can be tried in an almost risk-free environment. This can encourage experimentation in a way not possible in the real world. There have been some very real examples of this in the past, such as people with disabilities gathering in the virtual world to meet others and discuss their situations. A recent news story on CNN.com discusses patients with autism meeting in Second Life for support. It can be read [here](http://www.cnn.com/2008/HEALTH/conditions/03/28/sl.autism.irpt/index.html?iref=newssearch) (http://www.cnn.com/2008/HEALTH/conditions/03/28/sl.autism.irpt/index.html?iref=newssearch).

3) More than chat rooms

In many ways Second Life is like a glorified chat room; however, the fact that the avatars exist in a virtual universe changes the feel of a discussion. Being able to actually “see” the person you are talking with can have a great effect on the conversation, even if that person’s avatar looks nothing like them. Exploring Second Life demonstrates how the virtual atmosphere enhances the experience. People sit around a virtual campfire or in a booth in a virtual coffee shop to talk, providing a sense of community and realism that is not available in a chat room. It is beyond this study to say how this might affect one’s

openness in conversation in general, but most of the people I talked with said they liked Second Life because they “just like to talk to people.”

4) Second Life encourages active participation

There are certainly many other options for distance learning, but the way that Second Life encourages active participation is unparalleled. Students actually have to be engaged in the world to talk with other users and explore the virtual world, and more often than not, they will probably want to be. Second Life can take a serious commitment, but that can result in a serious result. The educational ideas listed below all have the student doing far more than just listening to a lecture. In fact, if a professor is just interested in lecturing, there is really no reason to use Second Life. The software allows, and almost requires, that students be actively involved in what they are learning.

5) Linden Lab provides a free trial for teachers

On the practical side, Linden Lab offers a one-time trial period for educators. This will allow an educator to teach in a designated spot where students can build something for one semester free of charge. [Click here](http://www.simteach.com/wiki/index.php?title=Second_Life_Education_Wiki) (http://www.simteach.com/wiki/index.php?title=Second_Life_Education_Wiki) for details. It should be noted that it is totally free to sign-on and use the program. It begins to cost money once someone is interested in owning land to build things, or if he/she wants to purchase items in the game, which can range from decorations, to clothes, to just about anything.

6) Students “get” games

Today’s students know more about video games and feel more comfortable with computers than any before. Students, I predict, will be eager to participate in Second Life. In fact, some educators argue that if we don’t use technology to engage students, and therefore teach them how use technology in a way that enhances their education, we are failing them. For a wonderful article by Henry Jenkins of MIT’s Comparative Media Studies Program, [click here](http://www.digitallearning.macfound.org/site/c.enJLKQNiFiG/b.2108773/apps/nl/content2.asp?content_id=%7bCD911571-0240-4714-A93B-1D0C07C7B6C1%7d¬oc=1)

(http://www.digitallearning.macfound.org/site/c.enJLKQNiFiG/b.2108773/apps/nl/content2.asp?content_id=%7bCD911571-0240-4714-A93B-1D0C07C7B6C1%7d¬oc=1)

7) Less authority

Some educators might be dubious about ceding some control over the classroom, but Second Life can make it very easy to have an environment in which students take charge. Less authority for the instructor can create the opportunity for more engaging discussions that involve more participants than would usually speak up in class.

8) Methods of communication are easy and varied

Educators will find numerous ways to provide information for, and connect with, their students. The most basic tool, the chat interface, is easy to use and Second Life provides a log of all conversation during a session which can be copied into a Word document. Users can also instant message other online users, regardless of location in Second Life, which could prove most helpful in a class. For example, if a professor sends his or her students out into the program to complete an assignment, he or she can easily contact all of them with one click to tell them to return. Linden Labs has also added a voice chat feature, which means that anyone with a basic microphone and headphones can talk with other users, greatly enhancing the possibly for course discussion.

9) There is a large, pre-existent social network in Second Life

The vast majority of users in Second Life are not there for educational or business-related reasons. Most are there simply to form friendships, communicate with other people, and generally enhance their first lives. The search feature in Second Life allow the user to see where and when events are taking place across the virtual universe. Many users frequent certain clubs and locations and, speaking from experience, it is very easy to form relationships and strike up conversations with people from around the world that one would never speak with otherwise. Using myself as an example, I happen to be a fan of early roots blues. In Second Life I have found a few clubs that cater almost exclusively to this type of music. Instead of just listening to an online stream, I am able to actually meet people that share a similar passion and have had wonderful conversations with music lovers from around the world that has broadened not only my knowledge base of artists, but also my conception of how music touches people's lives.

C) The Negative Aspects of Second Life

This section is somewhat shorter than in my previous paper because Linden Labs has made recent strides concerning the distribution and consumption of adult content. Still, there are some negative facets of which a potential user should be aware, but I do not believe that they currently outweigh the positives. That being said, the responsible educator should be aware of some potential problems before leading students into Second Life.

1) Second Life requires high-end technology and frequent updates

The [system requirements](http://secondlife.com/corporate/sysreqs.php) (<http://secondlife.com/corporate/sysreqs.php>) for Second Life are high. The vast majority of computers over three years old will have difficulty running this software, meaning that many students will be unable potentially to log onto this program without some serious hardware upgrades. Also, the internet connection one uses needs to be of high quality. For example, I use a basic, 112 kbps, cable internet connection at home and Second Life runs, but not terribly smoothly, especially in high-traffic areas. This will get better in time, but at the moment it will be very costly to have a classroom meet in Second Life for any university that does not already have top-notch

computers available for students. Even if a computer lab does have the necessary technology (including high-end video cards), many labs are probably not anxious to have entire classes of students spending hours and hours every day on their Second Lives, which could cause some potential scheduling problems.

Second Life is also updated frequently, requiring users to download a new version before granting access. These updates are usually announced well in advance, but it can still be quite time consuming to update versions, especially if each computer in a lab must be manually updated. Related to this issue, Linden Labs periodically shuts down Second Life to perform maintenance. Again, these are always announced, but potential educators are advised to see when most updates occur and avoid these when course scheduling (most maintenance currently takes place on Wednesday mornings – information is posted here: <http://blog.secondlife.com/>).

2) Second Life crashes fairly often

Linden Labs has made strides on this issue, but the fact remains that Second Life still crashes frequently. An educator might recall how difficult it is to resume class after a fire drill; I imagine it would be even harder if during the fire drill all of the students left the universe.

3) The learning curve is steep

Anyone planning to use Second Life, student or professor, should plan on at least 3-5 hours of learning time just to grasp the basics, followed by several days of practice. Speaking from my own experience, it took me a couple weeks to feel comfortable using the program and a few months to feel comfortable with building prims (“primitives” are basic objects that can be linked together to build larger objects that can have physics associated with them) and scripting (which allows the user to create programs to control object and avatar behavior). This problem can be mitigated by having students learn in groups and share knowledge in Second Life, but an instructor should not assign anything very complicated for at least the first two weeks. Also, before the class even starts, a professor should spend quite a bit of time in Second Life so that he/she will have greater knowledge than the students.

4) It can be expensive to teach in Second Life

While Second Life does allow teachers a one-semester free trial period, after that time a university will have to pay for land. Second Life offers many different options for [purchasing land](http://secondlife.com/whatis/landpricing.php) (<http://secondlife.com/whatis/landpricing.php>), ranging from small chunks of a large area to an individual island. The price of an island, which is supposed to represent 16 acres, is currently \$1,675, plus \$295 a month for maintenance fees. There are also larger islands of approximately 64 acres for \$5,000. If a university is interested in purchasing an island to build a campus, library, or other spaces, Linden Lab offers an educational discount of 50%. Obviously these prices are not even close to actually

building and maintaining a new building on a physical campus but the cost might be prohibitive for some colleges or universities.

5) Second Life and other MUVE's place the poor at a disadvantage

The digital divide between rich and poor is growing. If a student graduates from high school without basic computer skills, then he or she is at a marked disadvantage compared to those who can afford a computer. Second Life perpetuates this problem because the software requires such high-end technology that only wealthy students and universities with enough money to provide students with computers that are not only high-end models, but also constantly updated, will be able to participate. If a teacher offers a course in Second Life and a student wants to take the course but can't afford a high-speed internet connection and a new computer, he or she will have great difficulty participating in the class. Once again, computer labs can offer computers that can run Second Life, but to really be able to function in Second Life takes a lot of time, and some computer lab staff wouldn't be happy with a student spending four hours a day "playing a video game." Therefore, at least for the time being, most students will need a high-end computer and high-speed connection at home that will allow them to log into Second Life.

Some professors, such as those for Harvard's first class taught in Second Life ("CyberOne: Law in the Court of Public Opinion," offered by Charles Nesson, Rebecca Nesson, and Gene Koo), have made it mandatory for students to own computers that can run the program before taking the class. There will be some students at every college that cannot afford the necessary technology.

6) MUVE's in general rob us of the human existence

This is the general complaint of the Neo-Luddites who distrusts technology, but it should still not be ignored. It is naïve to think that spending countless hours in front of a computer working on our second lives will have no direct results on our first lives. Certainly some of these results will be good, but it is very possible that at some point the negative consequences will be greater for at least some users. I have lost friends to the world of MMORPG's (massive multiplayer online role playing games), who sacrificed their real lives for the good of their fake ones. Obviously Second Life is different than MMORPG's like World of Warcraft in many respects, but in some ways the game can be just as addictive.

A potential problem with Second Life is that directly feeds into two common weaknesses of humans; we are lazy and we often don't like dealing with people. Students are already able to communicate with their friends, research for all of their homework, and order pizza without ever leaving their dorms. If we provide a way for them to only go to virtual classrooms then they might never leave home. Beyond this, an important part of the college experience is learning how to interact with other people on a semi-professional level in the classroom or by non-virtual interactions with professors – social skills can be just as important as other proficiencies when it comes time for a student to

look for a job. The more time students spend living in a virtual world, one could argue, the less prepared they will be to interact in the real world.

7) Second Life allows traditionally unacceptable behavior

This is the obviously one of the strengths of Second Life, as people are able to do things they would not normally be able to do. However, any professor encouraging students to log onto Second Life must realize that this freedom has created a very seedy world awaiting victims. Second Life is teeming with strip clubs, escort services, cyber prostitutes, etc. The real world is also, of course, but in Second Life people are free to do whatever they wish, creating an environment with no accountability or punishment system.

Linden Lab has tried to confront this issue with three approaches. First of all, there is a “Teen Second Life” (<http://teen.secondlife.com/>) which only people between the ages of 13 and 17 are allowed to enter. The login in pages for Teen Second Life repeatedly say that people will be prosecuted if they are found giving false age information; however, I had no difficulty claiming I was a 16-year old girl and signing on. Secondly, in adult Second Life there are two different kinds of regions, PG and M (mature). All of the adult areas are located in M regions (as are most libraries, art museums, and virtual campuses). However, in the PG region sexual material and foul language is not allowed. A university could easily make its region a PG area, which would solve some of these problems. Finally, Second Life has been beta testing age verification methods. When these are implemented a user will have to verify his/her age to access adult content. This will be great for the educator if only because they need not worry about their students stumbling into sleazy areas.

D) Some Educational Ideas and Possibilities

There are many, many educational possibilities for the game, but this short list will hopefully get some ideas flowing.

1) Role Switching

Probably the first idea educators will have when beginning their second life are the possibilities to be gained from role switching. Whenever a person sets up his or her avatar, they have endless options. In fact, until I got the feel of Second Life, by far the most fun thing to do was to play with my appearance.

- Having a student see how people him or her differently as a young black woman, an older Asian man, or big pink bunny can be a very educational experience.
- Perhaps students can be directed to change their avatar once a week and journal their experiences while walking in other peoples’ shoes.

2) Build something creative/useful/extravagant

Building in Second Life is mostly easy and intuitive. Even if you have no experience with 3-D graphics or construction, with practice, determination, and time you can build almost anything you can dream of. There are numerous places to go for help, and many of them are listed at the end of this paper. Here are a few suggestions for builds:

- An Art class can have students create artworks in second life, build a museum that perfectly caters to their work, and hold a virtual premiere.
- Architecture classes could build just about anything from a virtual city street to the entire city.
- Design classes could arrange and decorate endless hallways of rooms.
- Medical students can build gigantic replicas of cells and walk in and through them with their avatars.

3) International language labs

As Second Life is world-wide, the possibilities for language classes could be huge.

- A French student could search for an all-French party and practice their skills (or just soak in the ambience).
- With a little bit of communication, English teachers in Germany and German teachers in Ohio could arrange virtual meetings for their students to help each other with language skills. The first hour could be all English, and the second all German. (For this to best work there would have to be keyboards available for students to communicate with different alphabets. Many language labs already have this capability, but they would need to contain computers capable of running Second Life).

4) International collaboration

Because people often learn so much from working in groups, it would be fruitful to arrange students of similar subject matters to work together with students across the country, or even better, students across the world. Such experiences would provide students with invaluable inter-cultural communication skills. ([Here](http://www.edutopia.org/1709) (<http://www.edutopia.org/1709>) is an article that provides a brief description of students from New York working together with students from Amsterdam on building a virtual city).

5) Virtual advertising

Just like the real world, there are parts of Second Life that are covered with advertisements.

- Design students could create advertising marquees.

- Marketing students could design billboards, develop slogans, invent a new product, and rake in the Linden Dollars (which can be turned into real money).

A virtual shopping district:



6) History reenactments

I don't believe the technology will allow full-fledged battle reenactments, but it would certainly be possible to build some historic buildings and let your students loose with history.

- Why not have the students virtually sign (or rewrite?) the constitution wearing their powdered wigs?
- Students could even set up a virtual replica of a historic time, advertise for people to come explore and learn, and then teach people that come by – all in Second Life. Perhaps the students could build a replica of the Castle Church in Wittenburg, nail a virtual 95 theses to the door, and then have a theological debate with other students, or whoever might pass by (for the record, if you don't want people to wander by, that can be done).

7) Medical Education

Second Life would be a wonderful environment for a professor or fellow students to have disease symptoms that the rest of the class must diagnose. It can also provide a building environment for people to model human organs and processes on a scale that can be walked or flown through by students.

8) Virtual field trips

This could work for any discipline, but would probably work best for a class investigating human behavior in some way, and probably for a relatively small class. The teacher could set up a time and place for all the students to meet, such as at a dance club, art museum, coffee shop, and then meet together afterwards to discuss. The discussion would be more significant because each student would have seen relatively the same thing and possibly even talked to the same people. The teacher could ask, after allowing her class to spend an hour at a certain club, why someone would want to dress like a chicken and break dance, and everyone would have seen the chicken break dancing.

Here I am parachute jumping at the Virtual Eiffel Tower.



E) A Beginner's Guide for Educators

1) Logging on

If you have decided you are ready to take the leap into Second Life, then it is relatively easy to begin. First, log onto www.secondlife.com. From there you will set up a free account, go through a brief tutorial, and then be placed on "Help Island." Once you leave this island, you will not be able to return. [I must confess that I was far too eager when I first signed up and I did not spend anywhere near enough time on Help Island.] Make sure you can master the basics of moving around and talking to people (just walk near them and press enter, then start typing, press esc. to leave the conversation). There is a large area on Help Island where you can learn to build things. Depending on what you

are planning to do in Second Life, you might not want to spend the time to learn this. It will probably be most important for educators to be able to communicate, move, and look around with ease. Once you have mastered these skills you are ready to move into Second Life.

2) Places to go, things to do (SLURLS)

Now that you are in Second Life, here are some places you can go to generate some ideas, possibly talk to other educators, and start getting a feel for Second Life. The links below will take you directly into Second Life, or teleport your avatar if you are already logged in, but you must have an account on your computer before using them.

[Berkman Island](#) (Berkman – 123/219/24) – Harvard’s Virtual Campus

[Democracy Island](#) (Democracy – 116/220/20) – New York Law School

[Boise State](#) (EdTech 119/124/25)

[Bowling Green State](#) (Bowling Green State 113/171/20)

[Info Island](#) (Info Island – 52/193/20) – Second Life Library 2.0

[Montclair State](#) (Montclair – 128/128/0)

[NMC Campus](#) (NMC Campus – 128/225/42) – New Media Consortium

[Northern Illinois University](#) (Glidden 88/166/30)

[Ohio University](#) (Ohio University – 20/36/24)

[Ohio State University](#) (TELRport 88/212/24)

[San Diego State University Campus](#) (Meadowbrook – 222/82/20)

[Stanford](#) (Esperance – 66/136/131)

[University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign](#) (Cybrary City – 228/139/24)

[Vassar College](#) (Vassar – 110/112/27)

3) Online resources

Second Life is a hot topic and there is new information posted online all the time about the program. Here are a few links that will keep you informed:

[TELRport Homepage](http://telr.osu.edu/secondlife/) (http://telr.osu.edu/secondlife/) – Homepage for TELR’s

initiative in Second Life. Includes information on a pilot project at Ohio State and a wiki with numerous links and resources.

[Second Life Education Wiki](http://www.simteach.com/wiki/index.php?title=Second_Life_Education_Wiki)

(http://www.simteach.com/wiki/index.php?title=Second_Life_Education_Wiki) – There is a wealth of information here, including blogs, discussion pages, and links numerous websites (far more than I’ve listed here).

[Pathfinder Linden’s Homepage](http://zero.hastypastry.net/pathfinder/) (<http://zero.hastypastry.net/pathfinder/>) – John Lester, a.k.a. Pathfinder Linden is the Community Manager of education in Second Life for Linden Labs. His webpage also has tons of valuable information including...

[Top 20 Educational Locations in Second Life](http://simteach.com/wiki/index.php?title=Top_20_Educational_Locations_in_Second_Life)

(http://simteach.com/wiki/index.php?title=Top_20_Educational_Locations_in_Second_Life) – This list is hyperlinked to Second Life and includes some of the best places to visit.

[NMC Campus Observer](http://www.nmc.org/sl/) (<http://www.nmc.org/sl/>)– Homepage for the New Media Consortium page on Second Life

[Cyber One](http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/cyberone/) (<http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/cyberone/>)– This is the homepage for a course being taught autumn 2006 by two professors at Harvard. There are blogs and other useful information on this website.

[Liberal Education Today](http://b2e.nitle.org/index.php/2006/11/03/some_academic_locations_in_second_life)

(http://b2e.nitle.org/index.php/2006/11/03/some_academic_locations_in_second_life) – A frequently updated list of important educational places within Second Life

[Second Life Education Research](http://www.secondlife.intellagirl.com/) (<http://www.secondlife.intellagirl.com/>) – The blog of “Intellagirl,” an educator from Ball State University who frequently writes about her experiences with education in Second Life.

[Ohio Learning Network](http://www.oln.org/) (<http://www.oln.org/>)– There are often posting, discussion pages, and other information at this site; just search for Second Life in the top right.

4) In-World Resources

To access these sources: log into Second Life, click on ‘map,’ type in location name and enter the coordinates for x,y, and z axis’s.

[Academy of Second Learning](#) (Eson – 23/167/351) – Provides classes to help extended learning in Second Life.

[Crystal Gadgets](#) (Babeli – 110/119/23) – Free advanced educational gadgets.

[Daydream Island](#) (Daydream Islands – 206/40/20) – Includes tutorials on scripting, or the process in which objects in Second Life become interactive.

[Idea City](#) (Idea City – 71/192/40) – Intermediate tutorials on texturing, shadowing, and primitive building.

[Ivory Tower of Primitives](#) (Natoma – 209/164/27) – A wonderful tutorial on how to build in Second Life – try this one first.

5) Practical concerns

These are some things you might want to consider doing before leading your class into the wide world of Second Life.

Ensure the availability of technology

This will probably be the most important concern for setting up a virtual class meeting (see point B-1, [Second Life requires high-end technology](#), above). Some professors might choose to make it mandatory for each student to provide their own means for accessing Second Life, while others might want to provide space in a computing lab. Make this decision early, which might require speaking with Tech support and computing lab staff on your campus.

Consider some sort of waiver

Requiring a classroom to access Second Life could be a lawsuit waiting to happen. As mentioned above, in point B-7 – [Second Life allows traditionally unacceptable behavior](#); Second Life is a seedy world. In one test, I randomly teleported to twenty locations, five of which ended up being sexually explicit in some way. The lawyers at your institution might thank you for having your students sign something that indicates they know what to expect in Second Life.

Contact Pathfinder Linden

His real name is John Lester (see his website, linked above), and he is the man who can set you up with a free space to teach your first time, as well as all sorts of valuable information. For a description of first-time costs, see point C-5 above.