

Open Classroom Conference Workshop “Virtual Environments and Game-based Learning”

Organised by MENON Network

Workshop aims

The Workshop “Virtual Environments and Game-based learning” aims to:

- facilitate the discovery, sharing and dissemination of attendees backgrounds and their ongoing projects in the field Virtual Environments and Game-based Learning;
- provide a series of practical learning experiences exemplifying tools, techniques and strategies that can be readily implemented or adapted by practitioners to their own classroom settings;
- and structure participatory conversations around critical issues related to the use of massively multi-user virtual environments (MUVEs) in education.

Workshop target audience

The workshop is addressed to practitioners who are either new to Second Life and wish discover and explore the potential of massive multi-user virtual environments for education and to practitioners who are already Second Life denizens and wish to explore and build pedagogical scenarios and educational artefacts for teaching and learning in-world.

Workshop structure

The Workshop “Virtual Environments and Game-based learning” is structured in two sessions:

- 1st session, Thursday, 25 October, 11.30-13.00
“**A review of educational scenarios for virtual environments: what works and why?**”
- 2nd session, Friday, 26 October: 9.00-10.30
“**Second Life beyond the hype: taking real world education into virtual spaces, a recipe for failure or a the perfect mix?**”

1st session, Thursday, 25 October, 11.30-13.00

“Educational scenarios for virtual environments: what works and why?”,

Dr Steven Warburton, e-Learning and ICT Manager, King's College London, UK

Margarita Pérez-García, Researcher, MENON Network, BE

The aim of this workshop is to introduce participants to immersive 3D environments and to stimulate critical inquiry into the possibilities that massive multi-user virtual environments (MUVEs) offer learning and teaching practice. The workshop will focus on the review of a series of activities that will help participants develop a critical set of tools for understanding the role that these environments might play in the field education and in particular distributed learning. The participants will be equipped with basic knowledge to be able to explore educational scenarios and discern for themselves the value of immersive worlds and be able to respond to what many commentators foresee as one the next major technologies to impact upon the educational process: what does and what does not work in-world for education?

Pedagogical approaches that we will be examining in the field of formal and informal learning settings: situated and authentic task based learning, experiential learning, learning by doing and problem based learning and game based learning: simulation and role playing.

2nd session, Friday, 26 October: 9.00-10.30

“Second Life beyond the hype: taking real world education into virtual spaces, a recipe for failure or a the perfect mix?”

Dr Steven Warburton, e-Learning and ICT Manager, King's College London, UK

Margarita Pérez-García, Researcher, MENON Network, BE

The aim is to stimulate critical inquiry into the possibilities that massive multi-user virtual environments (MUVEs) offer learning and teaching practice. The session will be structured amongst four (4) identified key issues that will be addressed by experts and practitioners of the field

- *Critically appraisal of the limitations and possibilities for MUVEs in education (primary and secondary education),*
- *Pedagogical approaches and scenarios for use,*
- *Technical realities,*
- *Political, societal, ethical and economical dimensions of the use of MUVEs in education,*

After a short presentation of these key issues, discussion will be open and pick up on elements that have emerged during the previous days and presentations, however it is expected to capture issues around the following questions and themes:

- Real life to second life: what does and does not appear to work?
- Which pedagogical approaches seems to be the more appropriate for teaching and learning in-world? Why? (Amongst the pedagogical approaches that will be examined it is expected to make reference to : situated and authentic task based learning, experiential learning, learning by doing and problem based learning and game based learning: simulation and role playing)
- Representations: social capital and social presence: from F2F in real world, through electronic mediated distance to virtual F2F and embodiment in-world
- How to build communication channels between Internet and second life (integrating RSS, blogs, video streams, audio)?
- What value can we see for broader agendas around intercultural activities and citizenship?
- Is this technology mature enough? What are the next stages in development and how does the educational community engage?

Workshop capture and dissemination

Communication around the workshop will be done via facilitators' blogs where participants will access to the workshops presentations and materials, a set of bibliography and resources, the transcription of the chat during the public activities held in-world (i.e. the improvisation match and the debate in the argumentative spaces) and the snapshot and photos taken during the workshop.