

Jan 6 VWEC Shared Document

Topics to discuss today to brainstorm focus for upcoming sessions and continued networking for the Virtual World Education Consortium. Add your comments, ideas, or suggestions under each topic (include your name or maybe a different color text or initials like MM).

WHICH VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS Second Life is our home base but some educators may branch out to other environments. Not just SL but all virtual environments may be discussed (using SL as our home base). It is important that we are aware of where VW/VR is headed but not imperative for this group. Which virtual environments do you use for education?

Sitearm (sitearm.madonna): I am continuing to find, so far (06-Jan-2021), that:

- . For every XR world platform there is a set of affordances:
 - The particular affordances best matching the use case at hand are what matter most
 - Not so much what platform it is or isn't
- . For example, I am continuing to find, so far (06-Jan-2021), that:
 - Second Life and OpenSimulator rule the "XR for Build Your Own" affordance
 - VirBELA rules the "XR for Work" affordance
- . There are many other affordances that, added, at first confuse the issue
- . For example, what OS the XR world platform supports (mobile, windows, mac)
 - bandwidth demand (can constrain geographic access for broad use case populations)
- . In the end, if a selection **MUST** be made due to time constraints, it **WILL** be made
 - so all choices are an exercise in multiple-component optimization - i.e., a compromise
- . Furthermore, I am continuing to find, so far, that:
 - there is no **THE ONE** XR platform solution, and therefore
 - practitioners might be well-advised to be multi-platform literate
 - and also to pay attention to where the masses (and their money) are actually going versus where practitioners feel they should be going
 - and also to eschew indignation at being the "unappreciated" leader of your own follower-less movement for now, appreciating those few who do follow, and remembering that "it takes 20 years to be an overnight success"
 - in all likelihood you are appreciated so keep moving forward
- . Btw at last count (2020) there are 200-and-rising XR publically-available platforms

Is there any movement for cross-environment transfer, for example, can my avie in SL go elsewhere yet (SJ)? I'd like to learn of how educators are doing mashups and multi-platform uses with SL and other apps for a learning activity (SJ).

Rinda Montgomery--I'd like to learn about 3DWebWorldz for K-12, but I'm still mostly in SL. Rindy have you talked to Yvonne Debandi aka Evie Marie on 3dWW? The best time to do that is 1:30 sl time on

Saturday afternoon on 3dww. Or you can talk to me too... Dae Miami. Let me or Evie know how you want to use 3dww

Eileen O'Connor (Eilock Clavenham - eileen.oconnor@esc.edu) - I started in SL but my school stopped funding it AND we wanted to have our adult students learn how to make their own environments so we moved over to open-source through Kitley - I have many resources on how to make your own basic VR islands (working from artist that have made Creative Commons resources); I teach a grad course on make Kitley VR spaces - students like the course because they get a sense of ownership - but it can be hard for them to then get these VR spaces into their institutions

ITooyaa - I consider SL in particular to be an opportunity for augmented reality.

Second Life and Kitley/OpenSim (Alyse)

Eileen O'Connor - I am also looking at Mozilla Hubs now for a low entry way of bringing in K12 - but it is glitchy and not easy to use (for me at least) but I need to have better facility there - I am working up tutorials there -

Itxchel (CAVC Travel Centre) - Second Life only so far. First experience using VWs. Joined in March 2020 as a result of the pandemic to do an online learning event for my teacher training. Have since introduced this fantastic platform for education to my college. Would be happy to explore other VWs but concentrating on SL for now. The educator community in SL and support available is incredible and there are limitless opportunities for collaboration. Learning curve is steeper with VWs but they are worth it. Students need crucial 21st century skills and the pandemic has been an accelerator for them to use Virtual Learning Environments at my institution. I believe there is some silver lining.

Second Life only so far, have only been in SL and Kitley, no building yet in Kitley.

I have been using Second Life for teaching a nonmajors class in genetics for several years. It is also public access, and other institutions have used various sections of the sim for their classes. My online class is my favorite class to teach, and most of my students have enjoyed it. But not all of them. The learning curve is offputting for some.

Mike Shaw - I have used SL lightly for several years, making exhibits that I could use to create short machinima videos to use in class. My first class I brought in was in the Fall semester to do lab activities. I also use Unity and Blender to create apps that I can use in class with Google Cardboard (viewmaster+phone) devices... such apps are single user, though. My department likes Gathertown for student poster presentations.

Marly Milena-I use SL exclusively for teaching, training, creating. I have very little interest in going to other worlds. My student/learner base is within SL, not from the outside.

Second Life and Kitley (PI Illios) I have worked in education projects, mostly about Health Sciences

Greg Perrier, i am only using SL now, but have worked in OS in the past

Dae Miami. I started with Myst and then the online Uru, which still has several servers up. Then I moved into multiplayer Unity platforms like Extremality and Sine space. If you want TOTAL control of an online VW, check out Extramality on the Unity asset store. Last Spring my high school went totally to chromebooks and I had no choice but to go to the web based 3D web worldz.

Zinnia Zauber - I teach in Second Life because it is where I have invested my own money to support my college courses and where my students monetize their virtual goods and services. Besides paying for my own sim, I partner with other nonprofits to build larger projects on their sims. Also, our statewide org that supports our college system has invested in Second Life and approves the use of it. I am interested in other platforms, yet need to keep my energy and projects in Second Life to comply with what I have received approval to use.

Marie Vans - I take my students to as many different virtual environments as possible to get them to understand the different affordances each has to offer for delivering educational experiences. I take them to Mozilla Hubs, Frame, VirBela, Sinespace, Kitley and encourage them to visit Altspace, EngageVR, Rumii, and many others.

Mark Childs: There's a lot of excitement around headset-mounted VR as opposed to screen-based at the current and the last places I've worked (Durham Uni, and previously Open University UK), so I've been experimenting with those to capitalise on that. The Oculus Quest seems to be expanding a lot. No teaching undergrads as yet, but lots of teacher training and experimentation. I've found EngageVR to be the most flexible and useful, and the developers respond really well to suggestions for improvements. It's easy to record lectures in there, and load in artefacts. Some multiplayer games are nice fun places to hold meetings. A one-to-one with a mentor seems to go easier if you're playing crazy golf at the same time.

DOCUMENTING PROGRESS Documenting success in virtual environments is critical (Research, machinima, images, blogs, etc) CVL will archive the progress of this consortium and share in a designated place--- NOTE: We have virtual world community resources here at the main library branch including a bibliography of research. Example:
<https://sciencecircle.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Manual-for-using-Second-Life-as-a-teaching-tool-Secure.pdf>

Link to the form <https://forms.gle/iYNQVjzegYX7Rhvc9>

COLLABORATION IDEAS for individuals/communities/groups No need to reinvent the wheel (Share what has already been done) Joining forces across schools, universities and entities

Examples of successful collaborations. What makes them successful? And not so much...when are they likely not to work so well? Marly Milena

Sharing lesson plans [Virtual World Lesson Plan Database \(vwlessonplan.blogspot.com\)](http://Virtual World Lesson Plan Database (vwlessonplan.blogspot.com)) Yan Lauria

CVL has a shared group calendar- add yours!

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_RBgV2S4K_s1AEKOKEYvU1r_Dz5NXM1FDj68as-SUKs/edit?usp=sharing

I have a fairly primitive web site, where I keep various documents related to my class: <http://genomeisland.com/>. I used to keep them on Dropbox, but DB closed their public folders.

Eileen O'Connor - I have a number of docs on using VR spaces mostly open sim, but the same concept - seems you really need to have a story / activity to get folks to come back - an overview doc at this website - <https://sites.google.com/view/vrmarian/additional/purpose> - lots of other materials at that website too; would love to share more; I have even developed some [simple basic online courses for making Kitely islands that students can insert into other courses](#) - such as the STEM cert that I have; here's [my CV with my background](#) ; I have lots of resources - I put Creative Commons on all

I'd love to find collaborators who have done a great job of induction into SL for students new to this world who could collaborate on learning activities (Scot Jung).

Itxchel - Greg Perrier has a fantastic Manual which, as a new educator using VWs, was a life saver. It has been my bible. In addition, the support network offered by SL educators is excellent and attending their meetings on a Thursday and Friday really helps. Shame I cannot attend as often anymore due to work/study commitments. Yan Lauria's resources have been great too for educators. He keeps all info up to date and it is well laid out to come back and do it in digestible chunks.

Mike Shaw - I used Greg's manual to provide a framework construct a new experiment in Fall 2020 for freshman chem students., and in general to facilitate students plus TAs experience. Very helpful.

Greg Perrier, Yan Lauria has an area that allows you to visit other education regions in SL as well as has a educators tower that discuss how to use ed tools and shares lessons learned from teaching in SL

The common basket of tools is a real advantage of SL.

Marie Vans: I would love to see what content and curriculum others have used as well as approaches to learning assessment.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES Support each other in facing obstacles: steep learning curve, lack of admin and colleague support or adoption, too many emerging tools and platforms, too much incoming information. I tried to establish a VR program at my school. The cheap google cardboard was a hit, but when we started getting into Oculus Rift, I lost total support of my admin. There are a few teachers and schools trying to make programs with Oculus Rift or the HTC Vive. It is so much EASIER to create for Oculus Rift, and the projects can be amazing, but admin simply cannot get over the cost or that VR is “for games.” Oculus and Unity’s marketing programs with shooter games for VR are not helping. Too many communication tools: FB, Twitter, group notices, Discord, email, google calendars...and more

Eileen O’Connor - I would like to learn how others were able to make inroads in their own institutions - it can be lonely when you are the only faculty member using VR tech. I am a faculty member and do my own tech support (as has been the case since my school SUNY stopped hosting SL). I put up with a lot-of-flack but I have been running my own ship (OK, row boat) for some time and have enthusiastic students (adults who are teachers) but we get weighed down with lack of support, or even respect, from the education community.

Itxchel - sharing best practice and showcasing resources that can be shared and adapted for different disciplines is crucial. I think it is difficult at the beginning, but someone has to start and at least there is support in SL so it is possible. Interdepartmental collaboration within our organizations is key, then also collaboration with external institutions, especially maximising the potential of this global platform rich in 21st century opportunities for both students and teachers.

MarkC: yeah it’s a shame to see the “but it’s a game” response is still prevalent. I’ve been lucky that my current and previous roles were in research departments that focus on the role of fun and/or playfulness in learning, so playing isn’t seen as a problem. Maybe that’s an approach that would counteract the argument. I would point out that Oxford University have some content in EngageVR, and you can’t get a lot more heavyweight and traditional than an institution that’s been around 1000 years :-)

Mike Shaw - A major obstacle is that griefers can hijack Voice, and remain on the voice channel even after being ejected. Some griefers are persistent, and this problem can ruin student's experiences, especially when a TA does not have region admin privileges. One thing we can do is share various tactics for dealing with this situation. I resorted to having all students in the course in a group which was allowed on the region during scheduled class activities. I reopen the region to the general public outside class.

Zinnia - I am always happy to mentor and collaborate to improve understanding and gain support at institutions.

Marie Vans: My approach is to start with easy platforms (think VirBela or Mozilla Hubs) to hook people on the idea of 3D environments. Having a short meeting in Mozilla Hubs, for example, even if you are sharing your screen through Zoom, is a more powerful way to get the idea across that 3D is more engaging than LMSs or conferencing software like Zoom. Once hooked, the motivation can overcome the learning curve to be productive in more flexible environments like OpenSim.

Marie Vans: Another powerful way to overcome admin resistance is with results from carefully controlled research experiments that show these environments lead to better learning outcomes when compared to flat, 2D LMSs/conferencing systems.

What would we like to do about tool and platform use for VWEC? Marly Milena
Social media, such as slack or facebook groups would work for me: Scot Jung

MARLY- Some clarification of which platforms to use for what purposes would be helpful. Zoom is great for large assemblies, sharing screen and breakout rooms. SL (for Me) is better for smaller in-depth learning groups. The needs of academics is different from the needs of adult education Facilitators. WE might consider having sub-groups of different kinds of virtual educators.

DISRUPTIVE TECH Discussion on emerging virtual worlds and XR (extended reality, multiple realities and the nomenclature of virtual environments in education) How have you utilized innovation ?

Eileen O'Connor - what has the changes that Google is making (dropping Google poly and expeditions & Tour creator) have to say about VR / AR in general??? I have to muscle through on my own - challenging but fun too. I teach courses where students need to find their own tech - so I learn from them too. --- My K12 teachers (some of my students) they say the kids are so tired of Zoom - the kids need something more engaging.

Zinnia - I live in a very remote location in the USA with not very robust internet and students who only have access to powerful computers on campus. We work hard to be inclusive because tech is a barrier. Most students can get into SL on their home computers, but not all. We are all already working in XR. I teach transmedia digital storytelling and that assures equity within courses while exploration of the next hip thing is welcome.

FUTURE GOALS Future of the VW Education Consortium- quarterly meetings facilitated by virtual world educator leaders from various educational groups

We need to identify facilitators/hosts for the rest of 2021 and any ideas for that role. Marly Milena

CLOSE: How do you feel about the VWEC and today's meeting?

Eileen O'Connor - a great starting point; I look forward to learning from and working with others. I like to learn as much about new tech as possible since I work in an emerging-tech masters - but VR is my favorite

Sorry I joined late but glad to be here –Acuppa Tae (John O'Connor) Link to website for class I teach in SL <https://virtualenvironmentsmodule.com>

Mike Shaw: Great start!. I liked having the google doc open at the same time as the meeting. It did make the content delivery a bit more random access, though, so it was harder for me to keep up.

Val: Mentoring educators is something we need to address! (Like the old ISTE beach sessions) VWEC quarterly sessions are not totally focused on mentoring but want to point to the best ways to mentor.

Zinnia - Delighted!

NEXT meeting dates for 2021:

Wed April 7th at 9am SLT Hosted and facilitated by Elli Pinion

Wed July 7th at 9am SLT Hosted and facilitated by tba

Wed Oct 6th at 9am SLT Hosted and facilitated by tba

In attendance: (I'm missing one person)

Widget Whiteberry

Wordsmith Jarvinen

Alyse

Bevan Whitfield

DeeDeeBeaker

Dodge Threebeards

IrineAdlr

Magua

Marly

ChemE

John O'Connor

Max Chatnoir

PI

Zinnia Zauber

Sitearm

Suemoon Magic

Dae Miami

(I'm missing one person)

From John O'Connor aka Acuppa Tae on 18 January 2021:

Summary of outputs from VWEC meeting on 6 January 2021

Which VR Environments?

The majority favour SL.

Coming in very much behind but in second place is Kitley.

OS was referenced also.

Sitearm Maddona argues for becoming familiar with a range of platforms so that different activities can be better supported.

The discussion also moved on to immersive 3-D VR such as:

Oculus

Google Cardboard

Mozilla Hubs--runs in a browser with no viewer download, and in goggles but imho (ScottM) runs better for creation and communication in the browser.

The group might wish to discuss if it wants to include immersive 3-D VR on future agendas (see the section Disruptive Tech below).

Collaboration

There is an appetite for collaboration and engagement.

Some resources shared:

- Greg Perrier shared his Virtual Worlds Teaching Manual
<https://sciencecircle.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Manual-for-using-Second-Life-as-a-teaching-tool-Secure.pdf>
- Yan Lauria shared the Virtual World Lesson Plan Database which has resources from a virtual world teacher training project
<http://vwlessonplan.blogspot.com>
- CVL shared group calendar
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_RBgV2S4K_s1AEKOKEYvU1r_Dz5NXM1FDj68as-SUKs/edit
- Genome Island shared resources for teaching genetics
<http://genomeisland.com>

- Eileen O'Connor shared An Overview of the Possibilities of Immersive Virtual Reality <https://sites.google.com/view/vrmarian/additional/purpose>
- Eileen O'Connor shared a website with directions for designing and building in Kately <https://sites.google.com/view/vrimmersioncourse-short/home>
- John O'Connor shared the website recording the delivery of his module Virtual Environments: Is one life enough? since 2009 <https://virtualenvironmentsmodule.com>
- John O'Connor shared the paper Inter-University International Collaboration for an Online Course: A Case Study https://eudl.eu/doi/10.1007/978-3-319-13293-8_20

Overcoming Obstacles

Loneliness – adopting and adapting this technology without the support of parent institutions or technical support is a common theme.

Griefing is another issue where the teacher does not have control of the environment.

Disruptive Tech

Sitearm suggests there is no single solution and that in the absence of a leading platform it is useful for teachers to be fluent in as many platforms as possible. He also notes that different platforms offer varying affordances. ScottM heartily agrees.

The group might wish to discuss if it wants to include immersive 3-D VR, such as Oculus, Google Cardboard, HTC Hive etc on future agendas.

Do we want to include Augmented Reality?

Future Goals

1. Agree and publish a calendar of events for 2021

2. Identify future facilitators and hosts
3. Agree purpose and role of Virtual Worlds Education Consortium

Questions

- Is cross-environment transfer for avatars a possibility?
- Can I learn about 3DWebWorldz for K-12?

Murat Gulmez aka (Magua Theriac)

Which virtual environments do you use for education?

Second Life and Open simulator are being the major platforms used by educators. There are other platforms such as Opensim, VirBELA , Kitely etc. **(There are 200-and-rising XR publically-available platforms by 2020)** There is a decision to make by educators here should they **“follow the masses (and their money) are actually going versus where practitioners feel they should be going.”**

According to the educators needs, **“there is no THE ONE XR platform solution, and therefore** practitioners might be well-advised to be multi-platform literate”. Evaluate all the platforms according to their needs and choose which platform they should use for their own projects.

To summarize the issues regarding choosing the best platform and how educators should decide where to go;

Issues:

Funding of Sims: Lots of educators funds their own sim from their own pocket! Therefore they seek new cost efficient platforms .

Griefing or disturbing content: Another concern is griefing and adult content in SL or similar platforms. The educators and students seeks privacy to avoid those. Yet there are pros and cons. While providing privacy you are also isolating the students from what there is in virtual worlds. The residents , groups organizatons and companies achieve

alot of fantatic things in SL for example so. Maybe a balance between privacy and freedom needed in these virtual worlds.

Audience: Platforms might change and vary according to the needs of your audience (for example K12 vs Higher education)

Complementary Tools: Some different worlds, platforms or technologies might be used complementary to each other. For example I am using zoom and virtual worlds together.

“My first class I brought in was in the Fall semester to do lab activities. I also use Unity and Blender to create apps that I can use in class with Google Cardboard (viewmaster+phone) devices... such apps are single user, though. My department likes Gathertown for student poster presentations.”

Community: One participant mentioned “The educator community in SL and support available is incredible and there are limitless opportunities for collaboration” A supportive and helping community is essential to take our efforts to another level in education.

Public Access Platforms: That might create a blended environment with many institutions or organizations that take place. Creating synergies or sharing costs or spaces might be some of the benefits of using public access worlds.

“I have been using Second Life for teaching a nonmajors class in genetics for several years. It is also public access, and other institutions have used various sections of the sim for their classes.”

“I teach in Second Life because it is where I have invested my own money to support my college courses and where my students monize their virtual goods and services. Besides paying for my own sim, I partner with other nonprofits to build larger projects on their sims.”

Documentation and progress:

Some resources have been provided through the discussion in SL such as Yan Lauria's blog or Gregg Perrier's Guide... Meeting among educators and some dedicated people to document what is going on in SL really helps us to reach these document and information.

Collaboration Ideas:

Examples of successful collaborations. What makes them successful? And not so much...when are they likely not to work so well?

Many educators are very open towards collaboration yet very less we could achieve! So I will mention certain things here from my own experience. I will try to classify the collaborations;

- 1- Between individuals (an educator visiting another educators sim or course as a guest lecturer, Which I have integrated that to my courses already for many times. The guest lecturer is sometimes the founder of a non profit sometimes another professor teaching something else in SL. Relatively easy to achieve and very beneficial in my opinion)
- 2- Between or among Organizations (Between a university and a non-profit organization or another university, requires much more time effort and planning but once you have achieved the contact and organize your project it is much easier to replicate it for different students at other times. For example we have been working with Feed A Smile organization for some years now. And it has been pretty successful collaboration. For the last event organized by our students for this organization managed to raise 234000L in one event! Students feel proud of it and they experienced an international digital project management by applying it!

Possible obstacles:

- 1- Time constraint (most of us have other responsibilities and it takes a lot of time and effort to organize collaborations)
- 2- Bureaucracy in our organizations (to get an approval of your course designs or projects)
- 3- Funding
- 4- Lack of possible collaborators in your area or field
- 5- Cultural differences

From Beth Ghostraven: It seems like leaders for edu virtual world groups are getting spread too thin. Not enough of us, and the ones who are here are often working in overlapping groups

