

# Facilitation exemplar

## Overview

This section has been written for teachers interested in using *virtual worlds* as a teaching tool. Its insights come from the trials undertaken at GippsTAFE as part of the New Practices in Flexible Learning project, ***Virtual Worlds – Real Learning!*** They are offered as a starting point. There is still much to learn!

This section provides key information on:

- prerequisites and what to consider before you start (implementation checklist)
- the multiplicity of teacher roles
- mapping tasks inside and outside the *virtual world*
- protective behaviour
- facilitation models
- tips for using *virtual worlds*
- *virtual world* terminology

## Prerequisites and checklist for implementation

### Experienced teachers

All teachers involved in the GippsTAFE project had between five and ten years experience in teaching.

Both VCAL teachers had been teaching VCAL since its inception in 2002. Whilst neither of them had an IT background, each was committed to ensuring that their VCAL learners were able to use IT as much as necessary in their studies.

Both 'painting and decorating' teachers had been teaching in this area for many years. One of the teachers had been using online role play with his learners for some time and had been mentoring the other teacher for taking over the role play facilitator's role. Both teachers were committed to increasing the amount of IT used in the subject area.

### IT-competent teachers

The Warragul VCAL teacher is very IT-competent and regularly changes the hard drive on, and upgrades, her home computer. There is no doubt that without her IT confidence the Warragul trial would not have been so successful. For periods of long-term usage (more than four or five log-

ins), the teacher needs to be confident and comfortable with technology. Whilst the Warragul teacher's learners quickly surpassed her knowledge of 'how to do things' in Second Life<sup>®</sup>, her willingness to spend significant time in Second Life, before getting her learners in there, allowed her to guide her learners through the initial few experiences and set the scene for her excellent and regular reflection/debriefing sessions with her learners.

All the other teachers were IT-competent and able to 'trouble shoot' and help learners orientate to the online environment.

### **IT requirements**

The *Technical considerations* section goes into more detail but, in essence, mid-range, recently purchased computers with upgraded graphics cards are required. Firewall issues need to be understood and 'managed' before starting work in a *virtual world*. At home, broadband connection is essential and within an institute the link to the Internet needs to be significant.

## Checklist of considerations for implementation

### 1. Operations – learners

- Ensure that learners are trained in the use of *virtual world* software.
- Ensure that they are aware of the processes to use to get assistance – possible training in *basic* troubleshooting processes.

### Operations – teachers

- Ensure that teachers are trained in the use of *virtual world* software and the e-moderation principles that underpin online educational delivery.
- Ensure that they are aware of the processes to use to get assistance and the strategies to use whilst these processes are being implemented.
- Consider possible training in *advanced* troubleshooting processes.

### 2. Time/allocation

- Ensure clear vision/guidance as to how many hours learners should engage per day/week.
- Ensure clear vision/guidance as to where engagement should occur (home or educational institution).

### 3. Compliance/AQTF

- Ensure that learning outcomes are fully met if *virtual world* is the only mode of engagement.
- Ensure compliance with AQTF teaching and learning principles and ability to meet auditing requirements.
- Ensure delivery of a quality program, ie a program that clearly meets the AQF level of that particular program.
- Ensure that a legitimate learning process can occur in *virtual worlds*. There is a need to extinguish the perception amongst many educational sceptics that 'online learning is not real learning'.
- Provide clear assessment *guidelines* for the teacher (e-moderator).
- Provide clear assessment *outline* for the learner.

## Example of face-to-face induction session (VCAL 'tourists')

### Topics:

- **New Practices project:**
  - Project outline/purpose
- **Key participants:**
  - Project reference group
  - Role of project managers
  - Role of learners
  - Role of teacher
- **Concept of a *virtual world*:**
  - Virtual worlds* compared to online games
- **Common terminology:**
  - Avatar
- **Trial groups:**
  - VCAL x 2
  - Painting and decorating
- ***Virtual World*:**
  - Allocation of an avatar
  - Logging on and accessing Second Life
  - Overview of common features of Second Life
  - Orientation to GippsTAFE island
- **Online security:**
  - Personal information
  - Personal safety
  - Seeking help or assistance
- **Equipment requirements:**
  - Accessing Second Life at the institute
- **VCAL scenario:**
  - Purpose of today/overview
  - Relation to learning outcomes
  - Role of Warragul VCAL learners
  - Role of project managers
  - Role of Leongatha learners
  - Role of teachers

## Multiplicity of teacher roles

*Virtual worlds* provide learners with a unique learning environment and teachers with both a complex delivery tool and potentially a highly rewarding opportunity to enhance/broaden their teaching practices. They provide the teacher with an opportunity to experiment with different teaching roles and approaches; such occasions are less likely to arise in a traditional teaching environment.

Teachers can bring the best of their teaching techniques to a *virtual world*. However, they should also seek to exploit new opportunities to enhance existing skills. They should use *virtual worlds* to consolidate selected elements of their usual teaching practices, explore new aspects of teaching or simply experiment in ways not possible in the traditional classroom.

When using a *virtual world* as an educational tool, the teacher will need to assume a variety of roles, which may include, but are not limited to, being: an instructor, negotiator, designer, moderator, motivator, builder, explorer, companion, instigator, participant, authority figure or merely a passive observer. However, it is essential the teacher doesn't try to become the controller and dictate the *what, how, when* and *why!*

Rather, the teacher's role is to help ensure opportunities for learning can take place, support is provided and the *virtual world* is used for sound educational reasons. The teacher's role will constantly evolve and will take many different turns along the way. The teacher must be forever mindful of the need to utilise as many opportunities as possible for learning.

Many tasks and roles must be undertaken for a *virtual world* to successfully be used as a teaching tool. The teacher must be prepared to assume a variety of roles – which will vary between learner groups and teachers.

The teacher must perform a number of tasks during three phases of the learning – before, during and after the *virtual world* experience. The teacher will, however, need to enlist the support of others, particularly the IT department. The teacher will also need to be open to sharing some of the roles. There are some fundamental roles of teachers but also a range of other roles that could equally be performed by some other staff member.

Here are some of the roles identified in the trials as being pivotal to a successful educational experience – it is in no way an exhaustive or prescriptive list.

### Explorer

The teacher will need to critically consider what they are comfortable with and the type of learning environment they wish to create. As with any new teaching tool, the teacher must devote a significant amount of time to exploring possible uses of the technology. They will need to understand the world and to experience the good and the bad within it! Whilst the

teacher may only initially be seen as the 'expert', they need to know how to create, modify and manipulate avatars, be able to construct objects, have an understanding of the world's currency, have an appreciation of the limitations/restrictions of the world and know how to gain assistance and about some of the more common 'nuances' that are peculiar to the particular world.

### **Learner**

Whilst the teacher may originally be seen as the 'expert', it is highly unlikely that they will hold this position for long. To maintain learner enthusiasm the teacher must then modify their role, as they will no longer have the credibility to remain the 'expert'. This may require obtaining the services of someone else. But it also provides the teacher with a golden opportunity to move from being the 'font' of all knowledge to someone who is prepared to increase their knowledge by listening to their learners. This places the teacher as a learner, providing their learners with the opportunity to acquire or build upon a range of skills, enhance their communication skills or to simply improve their self-confidence – all of which may contribute to higher-order learning taking place.

### **Avatar**

Who am I at the moment? What are the particular traits associated with this identity? These are questions a teacher will experience from time to time when assuming and playing out many avatars in the one scenario. Through the use of different avatars, the teacher can significantly influence the happenings within the *virtual world*. By participating as an 'unknown' avatar, the teacher can intervene and alter the experience to enhance learning opportunity, by displaying different personas, language, likes and dislikes and general demeanour.

### **Inductor**

How to induct learners into the *virtual world* is a question that all teachers will have to spend time considering. A variety of approaches could be used, each of which may see the teacher assuming a different role, along with approaching the induction in a different manner. Questions to consider include: Do I seek to control the process or simply let the learners go and be there if required? Another question: Do I conduct a formal induction process? The decision might also depend on whether the learners are using the world as part of a formal class or independently. It is worth bearing in mind that the initial experience in a *virtual world* is likely to have a significant impact upon some of the learners' long-term perceptions and whether they wish to continue to participate.

### **Flexible participant**

The role of the teacher will vary significantly at different stages of the use of a *virtual world*. One element that is common to all stages is the need to be flexible. Flexibility is essential for success! Teachers can't plan nor control all happenings.

## **Planner**

The teacher's core responsibility is determining the specific learning objectives and how the *virtual world* will be used. The two are very closely linked. For example, if the only use of a *virtual world* was to hold a few conversations with strangers, the length of stay and frequency of use would be significantly less than if learners were to collaborate with a number of others to perform a particular task.

Is the world to be used to develop specific skills, enhance self-esteem, build communication skills or provide opportunities to explore different roles? Is it to be used for individual or collaborative work? Will learners have to respond to particular events/scenarios? Will they be required to undertake research, build structures, earn money or complete a series of prescribed tasks or a blend of these and more?

The teacher must spend a significant amount of time reflecting upon the various merits or challenges associated with any particular strategy. However, the teacher is probably highly unlikely to be able to foresee all potential issues.

## **Debrief or reflector**

A particularly important role is that of debriefing the learners. Debriefing serves a number of purposes, both educationally and socially. When and how debriefing takes place depends on the nature of the particular group, the type of interactions taking place and the educational outcomes being covered.

*Virtual worlds* provide a great opportunity for learners to test ideas, probe and push the boundaries and encounter new experiences. Remember, in using them, teachers are often asking the learners to step out of their comfort zones and to be involved in something that may test their morals, values and many of their core beliefs. The teacher must adequately prepare the learners for the experience. For novices/new users, teachers will need to talk about the issues. There is probably no one model of debriefing that is best applied; rather use what works for the particular group.

It is important that the teacher is in the *virtual world*, as well as observing learner behaviours in class and generally keeping a close watch on what is happening. There is a need to provide learners with the opportunity to talk about what they are feeling and to discuss how to cope with difficult or rude encounters.

## **Facilitator**

An interesting role that the teacher may have to assume is that of facilitator. This may be to steer the learning in a particular direction, provide guidance and then assist along the way when necessary – all of which can promote greater independence of learners. Helping learners to become more self-directed learners is an important task of the modern educator. There is a great need for the teacher to provide opportunities

for the learner to experience 'situations' so they can learn from them and subsequently build upon them with the teacher there to support them!

## **Communicator**

In *virtual worlds* the teacher will often need to modify their tried and trusted communication skills, especially if the *virtual world* used is entirely text-driven. For some teachers only having text may be a major challenge, particularly if they are new to instant messaging (IM). Irrespective of the method of text discussion used, a new user will experience, and have to deal with, a number of differences compared to face-to-face communication and the use of discussion boards. The main differences are the use of abbreviations and emoticons, distractions and the length of, and disjointedness, of discussions.

\* Note: The above information is a summary of Malcolm Jolly's report *Multiplicity of roles*.

## Mapping tasks inside and outside the *virtual world*

The following table highlights key tasks undertaken either by the teacher or someone else in each of the GippsTAFE trials. While it does not have to be the teacher who undertakes all such tasks, many of them are pivotal to the educational outcomes and need to be considered when planning a learning activity in Second Life.

The **coloured** tasks are those which were undertaken by a project team member rather than the teacher concerned. Please note that these are not in linear or any priority order.

|                 | <b>Warragul VCAL long-term immersion</b>  | <b>Leongatha VCAL one-day immersion</b>   | <b>'Painting and decorating' singular activity immersion</b>   |
|-----------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Overview</b> | Identified learning outcome<br>Identified length of time that SL would be used<br>Identified role of teacher<br><b>Identified role of non-teaching personnel – in this case, project team members and mentor but could be main facilitator if teacher not taking this role</b><br>Identified model of facilitation<br><b>Identified IT implications</b> | <b>Identified learning outcome</b><br><b>Identified length of time that SL would be used</b><br><b>Identified role of teacher</b><br><b>Identified role of non-teaching personnel – in this case, project team members and mentor but could be main facilitator if teacher not taking this role</b><br><b>Identified model of facilitation</b><br><b>Identified IT implications</b> | Identified learning outcome<br>Identified length of time that SL would be used<br>Identified role of teacher<br>Identified role of non-teaching personnel – in this case, project team members and mentor but could be main facilitator if teacher not taking this role<br>Identified model of facilitation<br><b>Identified IT implications</b> |

|   | Warragul VCAL long-term immersion   | Leongatha VCAL one-day immersion  | 'Painting and decorating' singular activity immersion  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Exploration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• open</li> <li>• controlled/guided</li> </ul> | <p>Explored SL with learners</p> <p>Ensured all learners explored <i>Orientation Island</i> individually</p> <p>Protective behaviour strategies discussed</p> <p>Teacher created avatars for learners</p> <p>Regularly reflected on what learners had seen, where they had been and what they had done</p> <p>Examined and printed off 'help' documents to learn more about SL</p> <p>Regular interaction within SL, collecting objects of interest and possible use in the trial</p> <p>Assisted in setting up learners to take unknown avatars on guided tour</p> <p>Reflection on experiences and lessons learnt from guided tour</p> <p>Regular reflection/debrief in class</p> | <p>Learners 'inducted' into SL</p> <p><i>Orientation Island</i> replaced by a face-to-face 'how to'</p> <p>Protective behaviour strategies discussed</p> <p>Avatars created by project team</p> <p>Joined in verbal discussions with learners as they were exploring</p> <p>Printed-off 'help' documents were available</p> <p>Learners individually able to walk and gesture on one computer and datashow – fast track skills</p> <p>Resort brochure containing pictures and available activities received and discussed</p> | <p>Learners 'inducted' into SL</p> <p>Explored <i>Orientation Island</i> with learners</p> <p>Protective behaviour strategies discussed</p> <p>Teachers and learners created own avatars</p> <p>Joined in verbal and online discussions with learners as they were exploring</p> <p>Printed-off 'help' documents were available</p> <p>Exploration of SL to observe existing buildings, décor and possibilities</p> <p>Learners met with two project team members in SL</p> <p>Discussion of issues raised in group tour of the houses</p> |

|   | <b>Warragul VCAL long-term immersion</b>   | <b>Leongatha VCAL one-day immersion</b>                      | <b>'Painting and decorating' singular activity immersion</b>   |
|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Specific educational focus</b>   | Paluma Resort building 'built' and activity equipment and other collected objects placed at the resort   | Paluma Resort 'built' in Warragul trial                      | Houses built for learners<br>Learners met in SL and toured the houses as a group – much discussion about possible design options |
| <b>Realisation</b>  | The day of the tourists' visit – learners in-role and teacher in-role as well as overseeing the learners   | Teacher and learners participated in supervised activities   | Frequent discussion with learners about progress and advice on future tasks  |
| <b>Evaluation</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>debriefing</b></li> <li>• <b>reflection</b></li> </ul> | Undertaken by the teacher in the class following the tourists' visit<br><br>Learners met in SL with the avatar who interviewed them for their job<br><br>Project team member joined with VCAL learners and teacher for lunch and to discuss the experiences of SL and to meet the real people behind the avatars | On trip back to Leongatha teacher facilitated the reflection | Teachers, learners and project team members met to debrief the SL experience   |

## **Protective behaviour**

Protective behaviour is critical in Second Life. Learners should be fully aware of the range of situations they may encounter in the wider Second Life community and should be given a range of strategies to enable them to deal with any situation.

Protective behaviour, knowing what personal information should not be given out, knowing how to respond when pressed for personal details – all these are necessary skills in today's world of increasing technology use.

Whilst most regular and long-term Second Life residents strive towards a safe community within the world, there is an element among avatars which enjoys causing disruption and discomfort to others. There is a complex abuse report mechanism within Second Life and avatars are encouraged to report any abuse. Reports are investigated and offending avatars can be confined to what's called 'the cornfield' for a set period.

## **Protective strategies**

### **A 'safe' avatar and 'landmarked' place**

It is advisable that new Second Life learners in particular be accompanied by a teacher or 'safe' person. Tracey, the Warragul VCAL teacher, had her own avatar and a house in Second Life – learners could always teleport to her house. For the VCAL tourists and the 'painting and decorating' learners, the project co-managers developed two avatars – Glenda Arrow and Malcolm Dalgleish. These were known to the learners as avatars belonging to a project team member. Learners could IM (instant message) them for help at any time. All learner avatars were shown how to 'landmark' the island and were able to teleport to this secure place.

### **Regular reflection**

Regular reflection is a critical component of protective behaviour. It is imperative that teachers regularly ask each learner about what they have been doing, who they have met and whether they are feeling comfortable in Second Life.

*We talked about the situations that everyone had experienced and how they may have reacted differently. We talked about ways of removing themselves from threatening situations by teleporting to someone else or just off that part of Second Life and into another. We explored what happens if you just walk away and whether there were any other ways to remove themselves from a situation. We also spoke about the idea of just closing Second Life down if things were getting a little too hairy or setting yourself as 'away' so that, if someone is harassing you, you are able to get away. (Excerpt from Warragul VCAL teacher Tracey Taylor's diary)*

## **Shut-down**

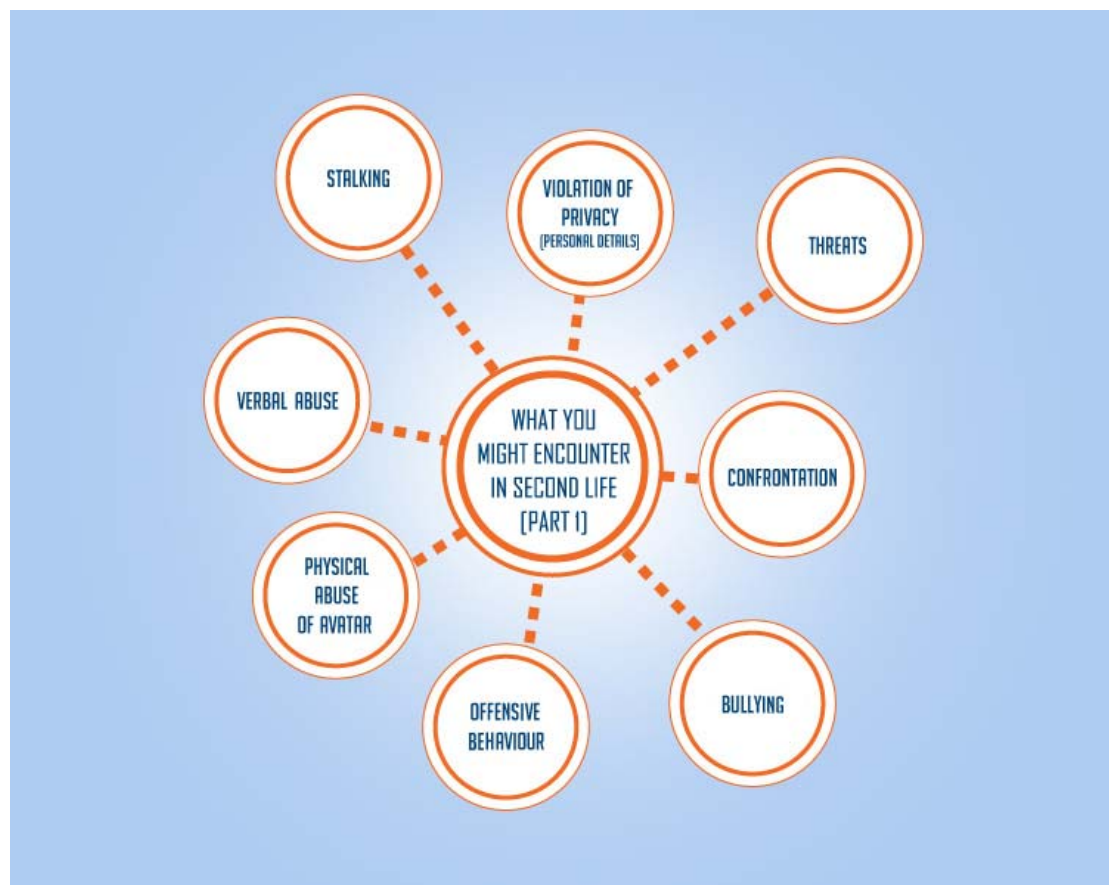
Whilst shutting down gets an avatar away from any immediate danger, Second Life always re-opens at the place where it shut down. In some circumstances this may not be desirable and it would be better for an avatar feeling threatened to teleport to a safer area before shut-down.

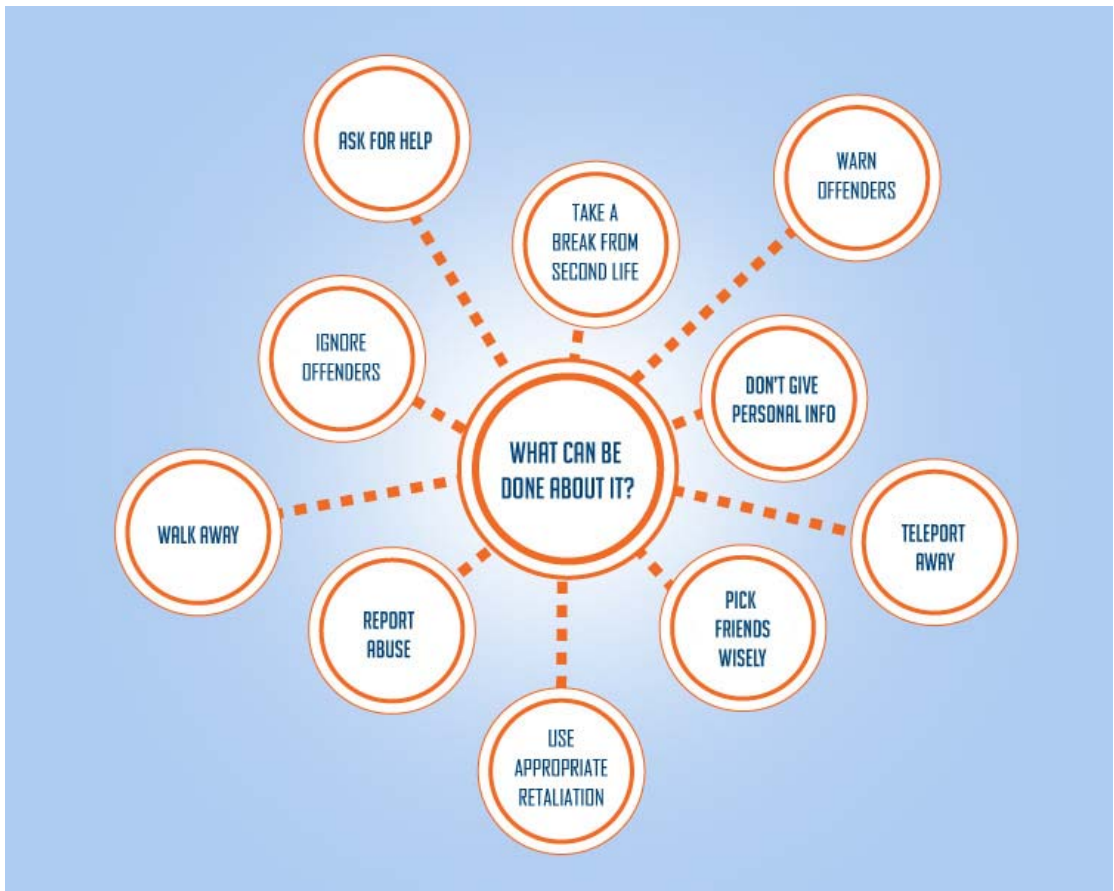
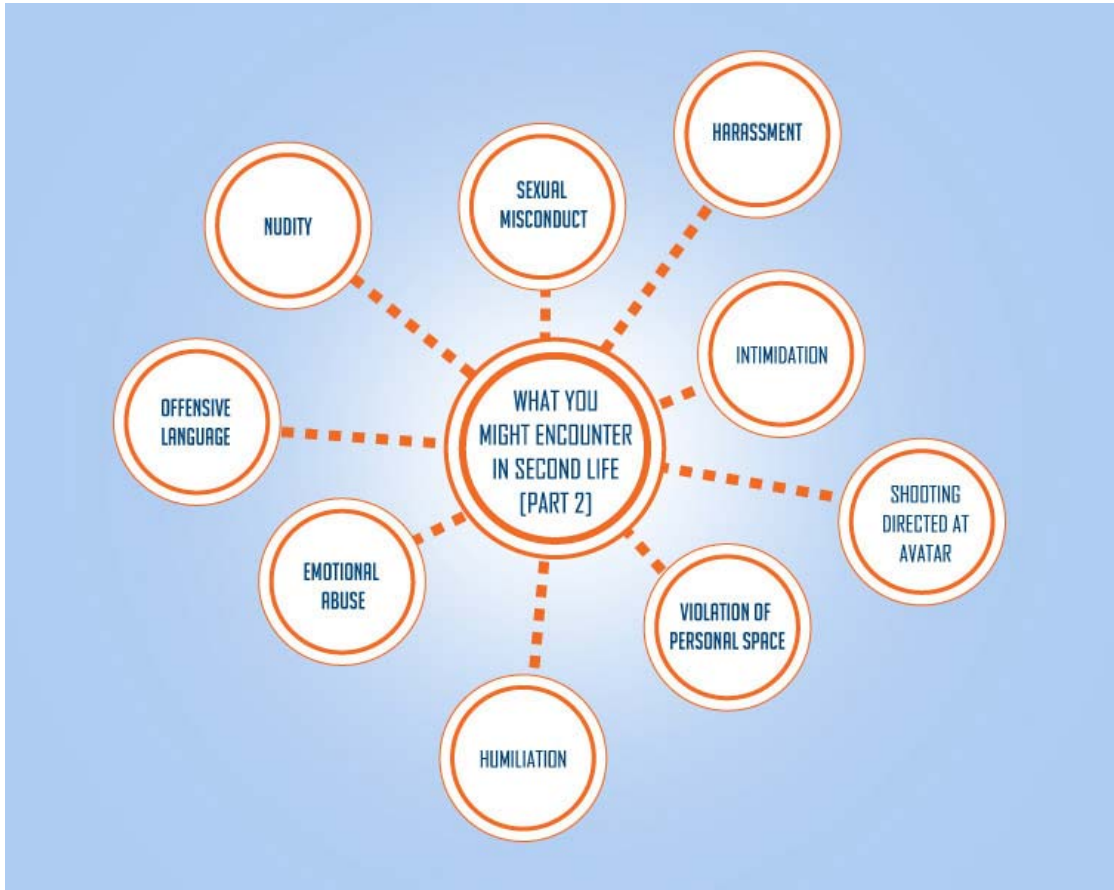
## **Personal disclosures**

This needs to be discussed initially with learners going into Second Life for the first time – and then reinforced regularly.

*For example, one learner gave out her real age and the fact that she had a five-month-old child. I explained to her that this was inappropriate and why it was so. I found that I didn't have to say much because the other learners had jumped in and told her that we were not our true selves in Second Life and that we needed to be careful of what we elected to talk about when we were avatars. There was no need to disclose personal information and we needed to look at it from the perspective of our avatar and not our real selves. It is not a lie. It is our avatar speaking, not ourselves. I have decided that, now that everyone has had some experience with the 'real' Second Life, we need to regroup and discuss in more detail what our avatar roles are and how they are different from who we are. I will also discuss who we call friends and to make sure we think before we offer friendship to others. (Excerpt from Warragul VCAL teacher Tracey Taylor's diary)*

## Protective behaviour strategies developed by Warragul VCAL learners





## **Facilitation model**

The facilitation model developed for the GippsTAFE trials comprises the following stages:

1. overview
2. exploration – open and/or controlled/guided
3. specific educational focus
4. realisation
5. evaluation – debriefing and reflection.

Whilst each trial undertook these stages in different ways and over different periods of time, each part of the model was critical in the successful educational outcomes of all trials.

| Stages of facilitation | VCAL   |   | Painting and decorating   |
|------------------------|--|---|---|
|                        | Warragul 'resort staff members'  | Leongatha 'tourists'  |   |
| <b>1. Overview</b>     | <p>Learning outcome – VCAL Work-related Skills Unit 2 (Senior)</p> <p>Length of time – most of term 3</p> <p>Role of teacher was identified.</p> <p>Non-teaching personnel were guided guests, interviewers and formal debriefer.</p> <p>Teacher was primary facilitator.</p> <p>After initial contact with IT department by project team, teacher contacted IT department directly as required.</p> | <p>Learning outcome – VCAL Personal Development Skills Unit 2 (Senior)</p> <p>Length of time – one day</p> <p>Non-teaching personnel were inductors and facilitators.</p> <p>Project team members were primary facilitators, with Warragul VCAL staff facilitating 'in role'.</p> <p>Project team arranged with IT department for Second Life to be on identified machines for day.</p> | <p>Learning outcome – Certificate IV Arts – Interior Decorating: Interpret and respond to client brief</p> <p>Length of time – 4–6 weeks</p> <p>Non-teaching personnel were inductors and clients.</p> <p>Teachers and project team shared facilitator roles.</p> <p>After initial contact with IT department by project team, teachers contacted IT department directly as required.</p> |

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| <p><b>2. Exploration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• open</li> <li>• <b>controlled/guided</b></li> </ul> | <p><b>Exploration both open and controlled/guided</b></p> <p>Extensive exploration of Second Life simultaneously by teacher and learners via avatars created by the teacher</p> <p><i>Orientation Island</i> experienced by all learners – this involved learning to move, change the appearance of the avatar, ‘teleport’, fly etc</p> <p>Regular reflection on experiences in Second Life and the lessons learnt – for example, class guidelines drawn up regarding divulging of personal information and appropriate behaviour within Second Life and on the Internet generally</p> <p>Exploration of what was available within Second Life, including other islands, help menus, reporting mechanisms and what could be ‘built’ in the project trial</p> | <p><b>Exploration controlled/guided</b></p> <p>Avatars created by the project team and allocated to learners</p> <p><i>Orientation Island</i> bypassed by this group – replaced by face-to-face ‘how to’ session conducted by project team members.</p> <p>Discussion undertaken on protection/safety, including issues of providing personal information and appropriate behaviour within Second Life and on the Internet generally</p> <p>A number of orientation activities designed by the Warragul learners to allow Leongatha learners to quickly feel comfortable and confident within Second Life</p> <p>Limited exploration – mainly in the initial stages of learners’ visit to the island.</p> | <p><b>Exploration both open and controlled/guided</b></p> <p>Face-to-face initiation for staff and learners in which avatars were created to allow email dialogue between client avatars and decorating avatars</p> <p><i>Orientation Island</i> experienced by all learners, allowing time for them to change their avatar appearance and interact within Second Life eg appropriate dress required when meeting clients</p> <p>Introduced to other project team members who provided online support</p> <p>Met project team member for general <i>virtual world</i> orientation</p> |
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|  | <p>Research/brainstorm of types of facilities that could be available at a resort – priorities listed</p> <p>Classroom research and investigation of staff roles, responsibilities, career structure etc and how this might relate to Second Life</p> <p>Classroom decisions made about resort, activities to be offered, staff role allocation, tourist brochure preparation</p> <p>Regular interaction within the wide world of Second Life and the sourcing and collection of objects for possible use in the resort</p> <p>Allocation of staff roles which led to interviews within Second Life for jobs</p> <p>Once staff roles settled, team meetings among the resort staff and planning for the tourists' arrival</p> | <p>Learners received a resort brochure developed by the Warragul learners in advance – and nominated their preferred activities for their visit to the resort</p> | <p>Reflection on experiences in Second Life and the lessons learnt – for example, guidelines agreed for protection of personal information and appropriate behaviour within Second Life and on the Internet generally</p> <p>Exploration of Second Life in terms of opportunities available for the sourcing of ideas, furniture, textures and décor objects</p> <p>Exploration of Second Life to observe existing buildings, décor and possibilities</p> <p>Establishment of client/interior designer relationship and brief</p> <p>Reflection on progress with teachers</p> |
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|  | <p>Prepared brochure highlighting available activities for tourists (Leongatha learners), using other software packages</p> <p>Identified equipment required for tourist activities</p> <p>As a 'test' run for the tourists' visit, acted as tour guides to unknown avatars (project team members), highlighting places of interest within Second Life</p> <p>Reflected on the above experience and lessons learnt for tourists' visit</p> <p>Ongoing regular reflection in class and in journals</p> |  |  |
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| <p><b>3. Specific educational focus</b></p> | <p>Resort and activity areas 'built' by highly experienced project team member in accordance with learners' wishes. Learners liaised with various project team members.</p> <p>Island and resort constructed and furnished to incorporate many objects identified and collected by learners</p> <p>Required equipment that could not be sourced made available by the project team member mentioned above</p> <p>Reflection on progress with resort colleagues</p> | <p>No opportunity for these learners to 'build'. All equipment and buildings used by these learners were in place before their arrival at the resort.</p> | <p>Each client owned a house that had been sparsely furnished. Learners redecorated living area in response to client brief. Learners could source furniture and décor objects through Second Life, the Internet or photographs. Images could be uploaded into Second Life either by the learners or a project team member</p> <p>Reflection on progress with teachers</p> |
| <p><b>4. Realisation</b></p>                | <p>Met and greeted tourists at reception, took them to the cocktail area for briefing and allocated them to groups according to the activities they had chosen from the brochure</p> <p>Managed and supervised the tourist activities and dealt with any issues and difficulties that arose</p>  | <p>Following free cocktails and brief orientation on arrival, tourists participated in their chosen activities under supervision of the resort staff.</p> | <p>Presentation of agreed redecorated living area by the interior designer to the client. Final product reflected the brief to the satisfaction of the client.</p>   |

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| <p><b>5. Evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>debriefing</b></li> <li>• <b>reflection</b></li> </ul> | <p><b>In real life:</b></p> <p>Reflected on experiences in Second Life in SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, obstacles, threat) framework at level of role in scenario and objectives of educational focus</p> <p>Related to features of role and Second Life</p> <p>Reflected on relationship between self/role and learning gained through playing of role</p> <p>Processed any unresolved, confusing experiences related to use of <i>virtual world</i></p> <p>Reinforced positives, contextualised them to current self/real world</p> <p>Identified and processed any individual externally-based experiences that were 'triggered' by <i>virtual world</i> experience</p> | <p><b>In real life:</b></p> <p>Reflected on experiences in Second Life in SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, obstacles, threat) framework at level of role in scenario and objectives of educational focus</p> <p>Related to features of role and Second Life</p> <p>Reflected on relationship between self/role and learning gained through playing of role</p> <p>Processed any unresolved, confusing experiences related to use of <i>virtual world</i></p> <p>Reinforced positives, contextualised them to current self/real world</p> <p>Identified and processed any individual externally-based experiences that were 'triggered' by <i>virtual world</i> experience</p> | <p><b>In real life:</b></p> <p>Reflected on experiences in Second Life in SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, obstacles, threat) framework at level of role in scenario and objectives of educational focus</p> <p>Related to features of role and Second Life</p> <p>Reflected on relationship between self/role and learning gained through playing of role</p> <p>Processed any unresolved, confusing experiences related to use of <i>virtual world</i></p> <p>Reinforced positives, contextualised them to current self/real world</p> <p>Identified and processed any individual externally-based experiences that were 'triggered' by <i>virtual world</i> experience</p> |
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## **Tips for using *virtual worlds***

Here are some important things to consider when contemplating the use of *virtual worlds* for teaching.

**Absorb** ... yourself into the *virtual world*. It is important to have credibility with the learners, particularly when you first start.

**Buddies** – Become ‘best buddies’ with the IT department – you will need them!

**Collaborate** ... with others, both within your own organisation and the broader *virtual world* community.

**Duty of care/dignity of risk** – Provide safe learning strategies for your learners but don’t stifle or too greatly restrict their opportunity to explore and experiment in the world.

**Engage and experiment** with the *virtual world* to gain an appreciation of its limits and how far you can push the boundaries.

**Flexibility** – Part of the excitement of using *virtual worlds* is that things do not always go as planned. Have a back-up plan!

**Graphics card** – You will need a computer with a fairly advanced graphics card and good high-speed broadband connection and you’ll need reasonable IT skills.

**Help** – Be prepared to ask fellow residents and use the online function to increase your knowledge of the world.

**Imagination** – Experiment with your avatar’s appearance; be creative in your building of objects; provide novel experiences for your learners. Let your imagination flow!

**Join** ... special-interest groups, particularly those associated with educational use of *virtual worlds*.

**Know** ... what you want to teach within the *virtual world* and develop innovative strategies rather than simply trying to replicate a traditional classroom setting.

**Limit** ... the use of the *virtual worlds*. The best strategy may be to ‘dip’ in and out of the world or to simply use it to achieve a particular learning outcome. Constant use of a *virtual world* is likely to reduce its effectiveness as a teaching tool.

**Money** – Many *virtual worlds* have their own currencies. Consider using a *virtual world* to teach about financial management.

**N**etiquette – Quickly build an understanding of what is acceptable behaviour and what isn't. Going inside and walking around a stranger's house isn't appropriate and leaving objects on someone's land isn't appreciated – even in the *virtual world*.

**O**penly explore the world – The more you discover, the greater the learning opportunities for your learners.

**P**edagogy – Use sound teaching practices to promote positive outcomes. Develop new practices.

**Q**uestion – Constantly question and challenge yourself to ensure you are providing innovative learning experiences rather than simply trying to replicate traditional teaching methods online.

**R**oles – Develop and use different avatars with unique personalities and appearances.

**S**ocial issues – Most *virtual worlds* have rules against offensive social behaviour, racial slurs, violence etc. Advise learners about these.

**T**roubleshooting – Have enough knowledge to be able to help learners resolve more common issues, such as problems with navigating, teleporting, building objects and resolving inappropriate situations.

**U**nderstand ... how to perform a wide range of functions in the world, including taking photographs, using camera controls, uploading images, sharing resources and designing and constructing items.

**V**irtual worlds – Provide a rich environment to build learners' confidence, develop or enhance new skills or to move learning to a new level.

**W**hich world? – Explore the various *virtual worlds* available to determine their suitability for your learners and the type of learning activities you intend to cover.

**X**-rated – Equip learners with strategies for dealing with unpleasant interactions or locations.

**Y**o yo – Learner experiences and enthusiasm will fluctuate. Regular debriefing with learners will assist in maintaining focus, along with 'nipping' any concerns in the bud.

**Z**zz ... Make sure you still catch some sleep. *Virtual worlds* have a way of encroaching on your sleep time.

## Terms

The following list outlines some of the terminology associated with *virtual worlds* and, in particular, Second Life. It is not an exhaustive list. You will find that, as your level of confidence grows and you begin to explore new areas or become a landowner, you will encounter new terms.

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 3-D modelling               | Use of a software application to produce 3-D computer graphics (ie models in apparent 3-D)   |
| Attachments                 | Items you can attach to different parts of an avatar's body, eg hat, hair, coat  |
| Avatar                      | A participant's representation of themselves in a <i>virtual world</i> , usually as a 3-D model of a person but also possibly as an animal or inanimate object     |
| Blogs                       | Virtual diaries  |
| Chat                        | A way of talking to people within close proximity  |
| CVD                         | Collaborative virtual design studio  |
| Cyber-bullying              | Bullying carried out through the Internet  |
| Cyberspace                  | Online world of computer networks  |
| Doppelganger                | Customisable image of a real item, eg car  |
| Emoticon                    | A shorthand method of displaying a feeling in computer-generated text – using an image created from keyboard characters  |
| Flaming                     | Sending of messages that include obscene/bad language  |
| Freezing, banning, ejecting | Tools used by landowners in Second Life to deal with unwanted people on their island   |
| Gestures                    | Animations users make their avatars perform, eg whistling  |
| Graphical user interface    | A user interface for interacting with a computer which employs graphical images in addition to text to represent the information and actions available to the user |
| Group                       | A team, club or collection of people with a common interest  |

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <i>Help Island</i>        | A place you can go to learn more about how to do things in Second Life. Tutorials and forums are also held regularly.                                       |
| Hypermedia                | A linking of graphics, sound and video elements in addition to text elements.   |
| IM                        | Instant messaging whereby a private message can be sent to another user. Second Life allows IMs to be sent to users even if they are offline.               |
| In-game                   | (Done) within the world   |
| Inventory                 | List of (virtual) items participants own or have rights to, eg clothing, objects  |
| Landmark                  | A way of 'bookmarking' a location so you can easily return to it  |
| <i>Linden Dollars</i>     | The currency used within Second Life. Approximately, \$L300 equals \$US1.   |
| <i>Linden Lab</i>         | The home of the Creators of Second Life – where participants can access technical and other support if required   |
| <i>Lindens</i>            | All staff working within Second Life have the last name <i>Linden</i> , eg <i>Pathfinder Linden</i>   |
| Machinima                 | The art of making real movies in a <i>virtual world</i>   |
| Message board             | Place where information can be posted publicly  |
| MMOG                      | Massively multiplayer online games  |
| Mouse look                | A view which enables viewer to zoom in closer   |
| MUD                       | A multi-player computer game that combines elements of <b>role-playing games</b> , <b>hack-and-slash</b> -style computer games and social <b>chat rooms</b> |
| Netiquette                | Rules or protocols determining how users should act online. Netiquette may vary between worlds.   |
| <i>Orientation Island</i> | The place of first arrival in Second Life – where participants learn the basics such as flying, walking, changing avatar appearance and teleporting         |
| Password                  | The word/s etc created by a user to prevent other users from accessing their account  |

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Phishing (phising)          | Method used by a fraudster to try to gain personal and financial details from unsuspecting people   |
| Photorealistic quality      | Very high quality definition  |
| Podcast                     | A multimedia file distributed over the <b>Internet</b> for playback on mobile devices and personal computers  |
| Postcard                    | A photograph sent from within Second Life to someone else, with or without a message  |
| Prims                       | The basic building blocks for creating anything in Second Life  |
| Privilege                   | What a participant is allowed to do, such as place and remove objects on/from land. Privileges vary depending upon a range of things, such as being a member of a particular group, a landowner etc |
| PST                         | Pacific Standard Time   |
| Rez                         | To create a shape on the screen   |
| RL                          | Real life   |
| Sandpit                     | In Second Life, a place where you build and gain assistance in building. Items are removed daily.   |
| Scapes                      | Virtual 3-D spaces  |
| Script                      | A program created to make an object move in a certain way, eg dance   |
| Security shield             | A program that prevents intruders from accessing a resident's land/buildings  |
| Shout                       | To broadcast a message so others not within close proximity can hear  |
| SL                          | Second Life   |
| SLED (Picayune) publication | Second Life Educators newsletters and forums for those interested in the educational implications of Second Life  |
| SLT                         | <i>Second Life Time</i>   |
| SLURL                       | The web address (uniform resource locator) within Second Life   |

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Snapshot             | A way of taking photographs of the <i>virtual world</i> . These can be saved to a hard drive, uploaded for use in Second Life or even sent as a postcard. |
| Stipend              | Money paid to some landowners by Second Life for owning land (depending on <i>how</i> they buy)   |
| Teleport             | To transfer to another island, region or place within the <i>virtual world</i>  |
| Texture              | A 'look' or 'finish' which can be applied to items to give them a different appearance, eg wood grain, carpet etc   |
| URL                  | Uniform resource locator – the web address of a file or content on the Web  |
| <i>Virtual world</i> | A computer-based program that simulates real life   |
| VR                   | Virtual reality   |
| VRML                 | Virtual reality modelling language – tool for creating and distributing virtual reality on the Internet   |
| Wiki                 | A collective online resource which allows any user to add and/or edit content   |