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Nuraihan Mat Daud

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CHAPTER 4

DESIGNING LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES USING SECOND LIFE

MOHD AZRUL AZLEN BIN ABD HAMID
ADELINE LOW HUI LIN
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Second life (SL) promises the possibility for the development of useful and meaningful learning activities in various educational environments. SL should be viewed as an adjunct to classroom teaching and also other online e-learning activities and applications. It has the potential to enrich and enhance educational activities.SL serves as a platform for collaborative learning and authentic exchanges. This paper discusses the possible applications of SL including for learning and teaching.

Keywords: Second life, avatar, collaborative environment

INTRODUCTION

The current societal trend and the rapid advancement of technology have called upon education to be viewed in new perspectives. This view of learning resonates in the scenario of global education. Studies have shown that the 20th century style of learning does not sufficiently prepare students for their future (Partnership of 21st Century learning, 2004).

To better prepare and empower learners for the world of tomorrow, there is a need for the educators to rethink the pedagogical approaches to be adopted in teaching with the advancement of technology in view. The "Digital Natives" (Prensky, 2001) are greatly influenced by the arrival and rapid diffusion of digital technology. These are individuals who a) receive information very fast, b) perform parallel processes at the same time, and c) multitask (Prensky, 2001). Prensky recommends that existing education institutions change the methodology and learning content to suit the new type of learners by taking into account the new and rapidly evolving current scenario. As such, formal educational institutions are faced with the challenge of addressing the needs of this generation of learners and thus take into account the new and rapidly evolving current scenario.

Research has shown that teenagers are increasingly using the Internet or emerging technologies – tools, ideas and networks convergence such as social networking software - not only to socialise but also to create content (Becta,2009; PEW,2007). Second Life is one of the popular emerging technologies that can be used today to provide effective learning space for learners. It isdesigned as a cyberspace venue for commerce, communication and camaraderie. As of March 2011, there were over 25 million registered user accounts in SL(http://www.kzero.co.uk/). Linden Lab, a virtual world technology company, developed SL as a multi-user virtual environment. It can also be described as a three-dimensional (3D) shared environment, where thousands of participants can simultaneously collaborate with each other via their avatars in non-competitive manners (Warburton, 2009).