

Citation: Gregory, S., Reiners, T., & Tynan, B. (2010). Alternative Realities: Immersive Learning for and with Students. In H. Song (Ed.), *Distance Learning Technology, Current Instruction, and the Future of Education: Applications of Today, Practices of Tomorrow* (pp. 245-271). Texas Southern University, Houston, USA: IGI Global.

Alternative Realities: Immersive Learning for and with Students

Sue Gregory, Torsten Reiners, Belinda Tynan

Sue Gregory, University of New England, Australia, sue.gregory@une.edu.au

Torsten Reiners, University of Hamburg, Germany, reiners@econ.uni-hamburg.de

Belinda Tynan, University of New England, Australia, belinda.tynan@une.edu.au

Abstract: As students increasingly engage with alternative social networking (or realities) there is scope for educators to explore whether they pose opportunities for rethinking learning and teaching spaces. The authors argue that there is a requirement to shift away from mapping traditional thinking about what constitutes a learning experience when considering virtual worlds. This chapter draws upon two case studies that have provided two distinctly different learning designs for Logistics students and pre-service teachers. These cases, alongside a comprehensive review of the use of virtual worlds in education will draw out issues and factors which need to be considered when pursuing virtual worlds as learning spaces. Specifically, discussion and recommendations will have a focus on pedagogical, organisational, equity and access, cultural, economic and social factors relevant to the use of virtual worlds in distance education.

Keywords

Second Life, immersive learning, alternative realities, virtual worlds, online pedagogy