

Preface

Imagine an experience, so immersive that your heart beats faster, your blood pressure rises and you cannot wait to get to class to do it again. Such has been the attraction of the use of virtual worlds in higher education since their emergence in the 1980s and their ascendance to the peak of their popularity in 2007.

Now ten years later, the authors of this edited book take the reader on a journey of creative discovery as they share their research and teaching practice utilising virtual worlds as platforms for engaging their students in immersive authentic learning experiences across a broad range of disciplinary fields. The authors share their pedagogical approaches to harness the affordances of virtual worlds to introduce students to contemporary issues such as the environmental, social and economic challenges facing humanity in the twenty-first century, engaging with cultural diversity, the restorative effects of natural environments and sustainability.

The affordances of virtual worlds as authentic environments that can provide situated learning in simulated environments are showcased with practical examples drawn from fields as diverse as teacher education, law, languages, sustainability, computer architecture, business, international relations, health and the arts. The authors show how they are combining their teaching in virtual worlds with scholarship as they use their teaching and the virtual world platform as virtual laboratories for innovative research into new applications of technologies to support intrinsically motivating experiential learning as well as strategies for enhancing feedback and assessment within these learning environments.

The authors share both their successes and the challenges they have encountered and propose strategies for mitigating the issues that can arise when engaging students with media-rich online technologies. The insights provided by the authors are therefore applicable beyond virtual world technologies and will be of interest to educators, researchers and students across diverse disciplinary fields.

Armidale, Australia
Rockhampton North, Australia

Sue Gregory
Denise Wood

Authentic Virtual World Education
Facilitating Cultural Engagement and Creativity
Gregory, S.; Wood, D. (Eds.)
2018, XIV, 206 p. 31 illus., Hardcover
ISBN: 978-981-10-6381-7