

**THE USE OF SECOND LIFE AS A SYNCHRONOUS LEARNING TOOL
IN AN E-LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

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ABSTRACT

The Use of Second Life as a Synchronous Learning Tool in an E-Learning Environment

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Literature Review

The researchers have provided an in depth look into the established connections identified between learner engagement and performance (Kuh, 2003; Robinson & Hullinger, 2008; Stott, 2016; Calvo & Reio, 2018; Stewart, Stott, & Nuttall, 2011), how virtual worlds have been used as tools in the field of education (Reinsmith-Jones, Kibbe, Crayton, Campbell, 2015; Girvan, 2018; Ramirez, Rico, Riofrio-Luzcando, Berrocal-Loco, & Antonio, 2018; Reinsmith-Jones, Kibbe, Crayton, and Campbell 2015), and how relevant adult learning theories (Harasim, 2012; Siemens, 2004; Hein, 1991) apply to transactional distance learning under Moore's (1997) theoretical framework.

Thesis Statement

Introducing SL as a synchronous component to an e-learning course will increase learner engagement in that course.

Theoretical Framework

Michael G. Moore's (1989) theory of transactional distance explains how the distance between the structure and dialogue of the online class, rather than the geographical distance, has an impact student learning. Transactional distance increases when the class is more structured

and there is less interaction, such as discussions, between the instructor and the student (Moore, 1989).

Project Description

The researchers performed research in conjunction with Texas A&M's online undergraduate course, *EHRD 315 Applied HRD in the Workplace* (EHRD 315), during the fall 2018 and spring 2019 semesters. Fall 2018 was used to determine a baseline engagement level for the course without the use of the virtual world Second Life (SL), an online immersive virtual environment (OLIVE). The professor for EHRD 315 took three of the activities required in the fall 2018 course, that had been completed by learners using a non-immersive technology such as Skype, Google Hangouts, or Google Documents, and transformed them into interactive simulations that learners were asked to complete using SL. The spring 2019 learners were asked to create an SL account, complete an introductory SL training module, and then complete the same three activities outlined in the course syllabus. The first interactive simulation required learners to analyze five different case studies that possibly violated different employment related laws focusing on discrimination, determine which (if any) legal statutes applied to the cases, and discuss what the participants believed the outcome should have been based on their course material. The second interactive simulation centered around the learners redesigning the job of a sales associate to be more satisfying and motivating using the *Job Characteristics Model* from their course materials. The third and final interactive simulation required learners to analyze three potential candidates for a job and decide which candidate should be hired. In each simulation, the professor or a researcher was present and acted as a facilitator whose role was to observe, listen, answer questions, and pose questions to encourage further learner discussion. For both semesters, a survey was emailed to students in the course after the completion of the third

activity. While the case studies were required for the course, completion of the survey was voluntary. The survey yielded quantitative data which was analyzed for learner engagement in a synchronous e-learning activity using the medium of Second Life. The researchers expected the outcome of the research to yield a new tool that e-learning facilitators can utilize when administering online courses that will effectively engage learners.

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KEY WORDS

HRD- Human Resource Development

HR- Human Resources

Second Life

Virtual Worlds

Simulation

Learner Engagement

Performance

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study centered around how to increase learner engagement in online courses, and the researchers attempted to close the gap of why learner engagement is poorer in online courses as compared to face-to-face courses. This gap was identified in Stott's (2016) work showing that lack of learner engagement posed risks to both the learners and their instructors. Keeping in mind that higher education institutions are increasing the number of online courses offered (Wilson & Stacey, 2004) it is imperative that the quality of education be maintained even if the delivery method changes. This research considered the approach that learner engagement with course material and final performance were linked, as identified by Calvo and Rio (2018) and introduced a synchronous component to an online course that could increase learner engagement and, by extension, final performance in the course. Stewart, Stott, and Nuttall (2011) noted that a blended approach of face-to-face instruction and online integration is key to creating a successful online learning experience. Michael G. Moore's (1989) theory of transactional distance, which explained how the distance between the structure and dialogue of an online course, rather than the geographical distance, has an impact on the experience a learner has in the education experience. Transactional distance increases when the course is more structured with less interaction, such as discussions, between the instructor and the learner (Moore 1989).

This researchers in this project investigated whether SL could be used as a tool to introduce a synchronous component into an online course. SL is a free virtual world launched in 2003 by Linden Labs and is compatible with Windows, MacOS X, and Linux operating systems. Texas A&M currently maintains an active campus in SL which was utilized for this research and

is pictured in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Part of TAMU's Virtual SL Campus- Academic Building & Sully Statue

This research expanded on this idea and explored the ability to create a synchronous online learning environment using SL. The purpose of this research was to provide instructors a new tool to help learners become more engaged with course content and to facilitate higher learner performance.

CHAPTER I

LITERATURE REVIEW

Established Connection Between Learner Engagement and Performance

Student engagement is “the time and energy students devote to educationally sound activities inside and outside of the classroom” (p. 25) as defined by George D. Kuh (2003). As colleges and universities continue to put an emphasis on e-learning, the concept of engagement in an online learning environment has shifted. Even though there is a focus in online learning, engagement is still crucial to a learner’s performance despite receiving little, if any, face-to-face interaction with an instructor (Robinson & Hullinger, 2008). A study done in 2016 established that student engagement is poorer in online courses as compared to face-to-face courses and this lack of engagement poses risks to both the student and their instructors (Stott, 2016). The benefits of e-learning include the ability to maintain a social life at university and to engage in extracurriculars like paid work or sports (Stott, 2016). However, these benefits tend to be overshadowed by student’s lack of engagement and learner procrastination until closer to the due date (Stott, 2016). Since most previous research, like Stott’s (2016), was conducted virtually but asynchronously, our research hopes to look further into this issue and test whether or not adding a synchronous component to an online course will increase learner engagement.

Previous research has established a link between learner engagement with the course material and their final performance or outcome (Calvo & Reio, 2018). For example, Stewart, Stott, and Nuttall (2011) found that a major driver for many students in web-based classes was the assessments for that class. Stott (2016) points out that “face-to-face learners could hardly avoid learning during regularly timetabled classes” (p. 61) but virtual students without scheduled

and enforced learning showed “a negative association between the extent of concentration of study and the examination results” (p. 61). Stewart et al (2011) noted that a blended approach of face-to-face teaching and online integration is key to creating successful online learning tools.

Virtual Worlds and Virtual Worlds as Tools in Training/Education

With the recent growth in undergraduate enrollment and classes that utilize technology and virtual worlds, it is important to understand the impact that these virtual worlds have on learners (Reinsmith-Jones, Kibbe, Crayton, Campbell, 2015). Virtual worlds, as defined by Carina Girvan (2018), are “shared, simulated spaces which are inhabited and shaped by their inhabitants who are represented as avatars. These avatars mediate our experience of this space as we move, interact with objects and interact with others, with whom we constructs a shared understanding of the world at that time” (Girvan, p. 1099). This definition will be used in place of Bell’s (2008) more commonly cited definition of “a synchronous, persistent network of people, represented as avatars, facilitated by networked computers” (as cited in Girvan, 2018, p. 1090) because it encompasses many aspects of a virtual world and differentiates between a “virtual world”, a “virtual environment”, and “virtual reality” which are all commonly interchanged although not all the same (Girvan, 2018).

Our research will focus on the use of virtual worlds as an educational tool in e-learning courses. A recent study conducted at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid used a Virtual Laboratory of Biotechnology (VLB) as a supplement to the traditional Biotechnology course and found that the students who used the VLB supplement learned more effectively and were more satisfied with their learning experience than those students who did not (Ramirez, Rico, Riofrio-Luzcando, Berrocal-Locho, & Antonio, 2018). One limitation to this study (Ramirez, Riofrio-Luzcando, Berrocal-Lobo, & Antonio, 2018) was the limited number of participants who were

spread out over only two semesters. Yet even with this limitation, the qualitative portion of this study which analyzed the student's perception and satisfaction with the study identified that concepts were "learnt by heart" (p. 38) rather than merely memorized from a graphical representation or lab manual.

What research has been conducted over the impact virtual worlds has on learners is missing some important aspects. Reinsmith-Jones, Kibbe, Crayton, and Campbell (2015) pointed out a major gap in virtual world (VW) educational formats in that they are mainly utilized by the psychiatric and medical fields but not the education or training fields. In Ramirez, Riofrio-Luzcando, Berrocal-Lobo, and Antonio's (2018) paper regarding VW in biotechnology practices, the author drew the conclusion that students who used VW learned more effectively than those who did not. The paper *Virtual World Interview Skills Training Students Studying Health Professions* highlighted the gaps this research hopes to fill by saying that "self-efficacy, functional and physical fidelity, student perceptions of learning, and students' actual learning need to be further clarified (Campbell et al., 2015). However, this research suggests a place for virtual world training" (p. 169).

With approximately 50,000 to 65,000 people logged on to the virtual world SL at any one time as well as its ease of use and access, this specific research will focus on this specific virtual world (Reinsmith-Jones, Kibbe, Crayton, & Campbell, 2015). The uses of Second Life in education and training have been well documented with over 200 higher education institutions maintaining property in SL (Reinsmith-Jones, Kibbe, Crayton, & Campbell, 2015). SL allows for learners to actively engage in real-life scenarios in a way that fosters decision making and high-level thinking, as seen in Reinsmith-Jone's et al (2015) study that allowed learners to experience different diversity dimensions and work through them in real-time. The scenarios created in SL

also allow for the transfer of information from the classroom into the real world, or “field practicum” (Reinsmith-Jones, Kibbe, Crayton, & Campbell, 2015, p.105). SL offers the unique ability to “perform a practice that in the real world requires resources inaccessible” (Ramirez, Riofrio-Luzcando, Berrocal-Lobo, Antonio, 2017, p. 42) to the student. Offering learners the opportunity to practice the exact skills they will need after completing an e-learning course in a low pressure situation, is key to the success of learners, and SL offers this ability.

Adult Learning Theory(s)

The three foundational learning theories that have driven the creation of instructional environments are Behaviorism, Cognitivism, and Constructivism (Harasim, 2012, p. 3). Behaviorism arose in the 19th century and “focuses on that which is observable: how people behave and especially how to change or elicit particular behaviors” (Harasim, 2012, p. 10). The observable aspect of Behaviorism made it “empirical, observable, and measurable” (p. 10). However, due to Behaviorism being the at the forefront of the learning theories, it was very “limited and rigid in its perspective” (p. 11) and only characterized something as learning if there was a measurable behavior change. This made near impossible to explain social behaviors. Cognitivism is “a process of inputs, managed in short term memory, and coded for the long-term” with the goal of committing symbolic representations to memory(Siemen, 2004, p. 3). Although Cognitivism attempted to explain what occurs in the mind, it treated the mind as a computer which is still too limited for the purposes of this research (Harasim, 20012). Constructivism is the “idea that learners construct knowledge for themselves--- each learner individually constructs meaning--- as he or she learns” (Hein, 1991, p. 1) The Constructivism theory takes into account the context of learning as opposed to previous theories where what occurs in the mind was separate from the reality of our lives (Hein, 1991). This theory includes

the importance of the social aspect of learning as well as learning being an active process rather than a computer process of inputs and outputs. Even though Constructivism does incorporate the context, it still limits learning to the individual and does not provide an explanation for learning that does not occur linearly (Siemens, 2004).

These theories have not taken into account the impact of technology in the learning environment even though they have evolved over time to accommodate our growing understanding of human nature and the changing learning environment (Siemens, 2004). Siemens (2004) described how important human nature was for learning theories to reflect the underlying social environments. The current learning environment is one where learning is a continual process, technology is shaping our thinking, the organization and the individual have become learning organisms, and informal learning comprises a large portion of a person's learning experience as compared to the previous majority of formal education (p. 2). He challenged the original learning theories by questioning whether the underlying conditions of our society have changed so significantly that further modification to the original learning theories is no longer sensible (p. 3). To solve address these limitations, Siemens (2004) presented a new approach to learning, Connectivism, which is the view this research will employ (p. 3). Connectivism can be applied to both the individual and the organization and characterizes learning as "a process that occurs within nebulous environments of shifting core elements- not entirely under the control of the individual... [and] can reside outside of ourselves, is focused on connecting specialized information sets, and the connections that enable us learn more are more important than our current state of knowing" (Siemens, 2004, p. 5). This theory incorporates an important principle vital to this research that "learning may reside in non-human appliances" (p. 5) such as databases or, in our research, virtual worlds.

Theoretical Framework

This research is based on the theoretical framework outlined by Michael G. Moore's (1997) theory of transactional distance. Transactional distance is defined as the "universe of teacher-learner relationships that exist when learner and instructors are separated by space and/or by time" (Moore, 1997, p. 22). Transactional distance does not refer to the geographical distance between the instructor and learner but rather the interaction of the two individuals because of their geographical separation (Giossos, 2009). Moore (1972) established this theory by combining the ideas of distance learning and learning autonomy. The term 'transactional distance' was used for the first time by Moore in the 1980s (Giossos, 2009). Transactional distance creates challenges for instructors when developing online learning modules because of the gap in the human interaction that fosters a learning environment. Moore and Kearsley (1996) claimed that the separation between the learner and the student leads to the inability to effectively communicate and therefore creates a psychological gap of misunderstandings.

Moore's theory of transactional distance is further divided into three factors that take into account the transactional behaviors that are developed between instructors and learners: dialogue, structure, and learner autonomy (Moore, 1997). Dialogue, in this context, goes beyond simple interaction between the instructor and learner but "this communication occurs within the context of clearly defined education targets, cooperation and understanding on the part of the teacher, and ultimately, culminates in solving the learner's problems" (Giossos, 2009, p. 2). The second factor, structure, of Moore's theory relates to the online course's rigidity or flexibility (Zhang, 2003). The final factor takes into consideration the autonomy of the individual learners. Autonomy is the "degree of decision the learner has over issues such as educational goals, manner of teaching followed, rate of progress and methods of assessment" (Giossos, 2009, p. 2).

Giossos (2009) continues his summary of Moore's transactional distance theory by making three assumptions of the theory:

- I. Transactional distance and dialogue have an inverse relationship to one another;
- II. When an instructor increases the structure of an online course, this leads to a reduction of dialogue and therefore increases the transactional distance established in the course;
- III. Transactional distance and autonomy are proportional to one another.

In regard to the second assumption, Moore does clarify that when a "course structure drops below a particular threshold, the sense of transactional distance can actually increase, due principally to the potential for learner confusion or dissatisfaction" (Falloon, 2011, p. 190).

Instructors need to be aware of the implications of their own engagement when facilitating an online course.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

Participants

The data for this study was collected by distributing surveys to all learners in fall 2018 and spring 2019 who were enrolled in EHRD 315 at Texas A&M University.

Over the course of fall 2018 and spring 2019, 67 learners completed EHRD 315, of which there were 31 in the fall and 36 in the spring. During fall 2018, there were 30 participants completed usable surveys. The average age was 20.5 and there were 25 females and five males participants. In Spring 2019, there were 34 participants with an average age of 20.9. This semester one participant declined to provide their gender, but the remaining 33 participants were all female. The response rate was 97% in the fall and 94% in the spring. The fall EHRD 315 class was composed of 61% HRDV majors, 20% USEH majors, and 19% other majors while the Spring EHRD 315 class was composed of 58% HRDV majors, 22% USEH majors, and 20% other majors, as pictured in Figures 2 and 3.

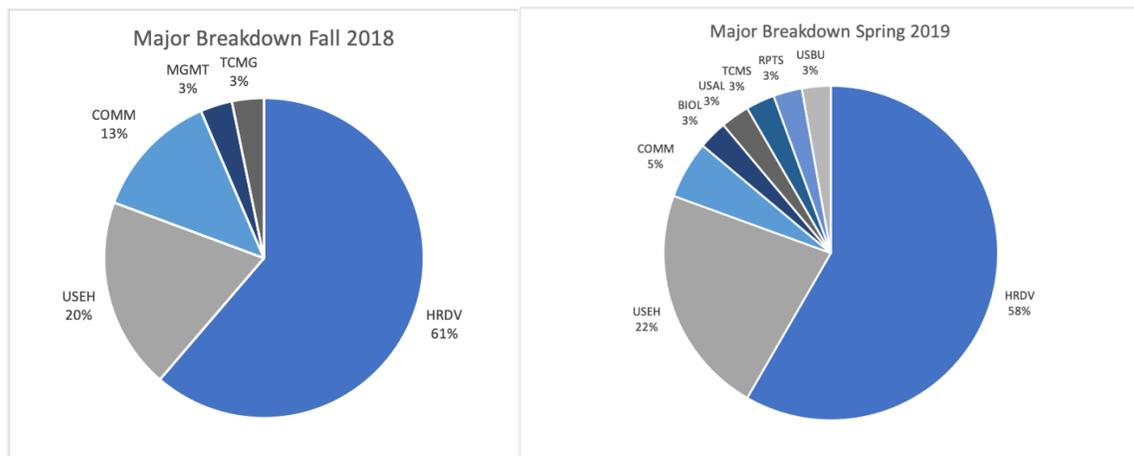


Figure 2 & 3. Major breakdown for fall 2018 and spring 2019 semesters

Instrument

In this study, the OSE Survey (Dixson, 2015) was used to measure the learner's engagement for each semester. The OSE survey contained 19 statements that asked learners to identify the different behaviors thoughts, and feelings that described them on a Likert scale from 1 representing "not at all characteristic of me" to 5 representing "very characteristic of me". The researchers created the survey for this research using Qualtrics, a software used for collecting and analyzing survey data. The researchers emailed the professor of the course a summary of the project, the Qualtrics survey link, and a request for student participation. The professor forwarded the researcher's email to her students at the completion of the three required activities. During fall 2018 this was December 2nd and during spring 2019 this was March 4th. Once the learners were received the forwarded email, they were given one week to complete the survey which could be done by clicking the hyperlink in the email and following the survey instructions in Qualtrics. Participation was voluntary an anonymous with no internal coding of participants.

Research Design

This research project was a quasi-experimental study which employed two groups of learners who completed the online version of EHRD 315, *Applied HR in the Workplace*. Fall 2018 learners completed the course without the use of SL while spring 2019 learners completed the course using synchronous SL simulations for three of the required course activities. Fall 2018 learners completed three group activities using some form of interactive digital technology like Skype, Google Hangouts, or Google Docs. Spring 2019 learners created a SL account, completed a basic navigation training, and participated in the same three activities as fall 2018, but did so using interactive simulations in SL monitored by facilitators. Pictured in Figure 4 is an example

of a spring 2019 group gathering in SL and participating in one of the three simulations with a facilitator present.



Figure 4. Learners participating in a course *SL* simulation

Data Collection

Two rounds of data collection occurred. The first survey was sent out on December 9th, 2018 and the EHRD 315 students of fall 2018 had until December 16th, 2018 in order to complete the survey. The second survey was sent out on March 4th and the EHRD 315 students of spring 2019 had until March 11th to complete the survey. This survey followed the same distribution method of fall 2018, the Qualtrics link with a request for the students to complete the survey was sent to the professor of EHRD 315 but was sent out mid-semester after the completion of the Second Life activities required by EHRD 315.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The results of the two surveys were downloaded from Qualtrics to Microsoft Excel and descriptive statistics were used to compare the fall and spring results. Spring 2019 learners were found to have a higher average engagement score than fall 2018. The total average engagement score for fall 2018 was 3.26 ($S=1.11$) and for spring 2019 was 3.73 ($S=.83$), which can be seen in table 1. There was a 0.47 increase in the mean between the semesters. When looking at the individual questions on the OSE, the means for every question increased except for question numbers 8, 9, 11, 13, and 15. The standard deviation decreased for every question except for question 15.

Table 1. Summary of OSE Survey results by semester

Semester	Average Engagement Score	Standard Deviation
Fall 2018	3.26	1.11
Spring 2019	3.73	.83

Fall 2018 Results

The fall 2018 survey results established baseline statistics for the next semester to be compared to. In the fall semester, the three lowest scoring statements were questions 4, 12, and 19. The highest scoring statements were questions 15 and 16. Question 15 had the lowest standard deviation while question 18 had the highest.

Spring 2019 Results

The spring 2019 results produced an overall higher mean and lower standard deviation than the fall 2018 survey. The two lowest scoring questions were questions 3 and 18 and the two

highest were question 2 and 16. Question 2 had the lowest standard deviation. The question with the highest standard deviation was question 6.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results, and the research limitations, the conclusion can be drawn that the use of SL as a synchronous learning tool in an e-learning environment increased learner engagement in the online section of EHRD 315.

Based on the results above, the conclusion can be drawn that the use of SL as a synchronous learning tool in an e-learning environment increased learner engagement in the online section of EHRD 315 in the spring 2019 semester. The overall average of OSE scores increased by half a point from the fall semester to the spring. This increase in OSE score leads to the conclusion that when learners were using SL to complete activities with their peers, they were more engaged not only in the course but in the material as well.

With the exception of questions eight, nine, thirteen, fifteen, and sixteen, every other question indicated increased engagement. Questions eight and nine asked if the course material applied to the learner's life if the learners found ways to make the material relevant to their lives. There was an average decrease of .06 for question eight and .09 for question nine in the engagement score. Question thirteen asked learners if they actively participated in small group discussion forums which decreased by .19 from the Fall to the Spring semester; however, this could be explained by the fact that there were less forums and more discussion and simulation based activities in the Spring than in the fall so learners did not have as many opportunities to engage in forums.

Question fifteen inquired if it was characteristic of the learner to get a good grade and had an average .19 decrease leading to the conclusion that future research needs to be conducted to determine if this was due to chance or directly related to the implementation of SL. Question

sixteen asked if the learners were doing well on the tests and quizzes and the .18 average decrease could be attributed to course quizzes not including specific information from the SL simulations.

Even with the five questions containing an average engagement decrease, the other fourteen questions, and the overall survey, showed an overall increase in learner engagement. In fact, when learners reflected on their experiences in SL, they viewed SL positively writing, “this week, Second Life surprised me. It is a cool way to meet up without having to put effort into my appearance after a long day” and that “it was nice being able to have this level of interaction with my peers and professor for this class being an ‘online course.’ I will admit, I was nervous at first, but it was neat seeing how applicable and interactive technology can be”. The survey questions related to engaging in conversations online (.42 average increase), getting to know other learners (.52 average increase), looking over class notes between getting online to ensure material understanding (.64 average increase), and having fun in online chats/discussions (.71 average increase) all increase showing even further that the addition of SL simulations into an online course increased learner engagement with their peers, instructor, and material.

In the free-response portion of the survey, which was separate from the OSE Survey, learners were asked to reflect on their experiences in *SL* and how the activities completed using *SL* impacted their views on the course and their future career aspirations. There was an initial pushback from the students in regard to the *SL* training. One student said they “found that I really do not use half the features [the training] discussed.” Overall, the students tended to view the training as “intense and time-consuming.” While some students said that the “training adequately prepared me for our case study assignments in this class”, these students were in the minority. Based on the results of the survey, the learners felt that they learned the needed material for the

course but that it included too much information that was unnecessary for them to be successful in the course. This initial negative impression of *SL* could have contributed to some learners' dislike and immediate rebuff of the *SL* activities.

Once the students were participating in the *SL* activities, there was an overall positive response. One student stated that "Second Life helped [them] learn how to communicate better through just talking since I was not able to see my group members in person." Most learners stated that they enjoyed the activity and thought *SL* helped their learning within the context of EHRD 315. However, *SL* required a learning curve that previous iterations of the course had not had to overcome which forced the spring 2019 learners to put in more time and effort than previous semesters as they learned how to use the new tool which led to more resistance from the learners.

While the personal responses indicated that the majority of students did not see the benefit in using *SL* as an educational tool, the quantitative portion of the survey showed higher learner engagement. This meant that while the training could have been improved to be more concise and the *SL* learning curve appeared difficult to overcome to the learners, it did increase learner engagement in the course despite the learner's personal statements. The spring 2019 semester was the first time this course was implemented using this new structure. For future research, this experiment could be done again to adjust the *SL* training to be better fit to the specific needs of the students and the course. If the training was adjusted to reduce the initial pushback from the students, then more improvement might be seen in the learner's engagement as well as their personal perspectives from the course.

There were four major limitations to this study: (1) the course used was relatively small, lending a sample of 64, (2) the project was confined by a strict timeline of two semesters, (3) the

project only focused on one course, and (4) there were two completely different groups of learners. This meant that there was a change in learners and treatment. However, these limitations open the door to future research opportunities. Some possibilities include using SL as the location of virtual recitations guided by TAs allowing the university to conserve space allowing learners to still receive the benefit of small group teachings and a review from the larger group lecture time, attempting to use SL in a more technical discipline such as mathematics, and comparing the use of SL within different versions of the same course (face-to-face vs. online).

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APPENDIX

Fall 2018 Engagement Survey

Section 1: Demographics

1. What is your age? _____
2. What is your major? _____
3. What is your current employment status?
 - a. Full-time employment
 - b. Part-time employment
 - c. Unemployed
 - d. Self-employed
 - e. Student
4. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other (please specify)
5. What is your ethnicity?
 - a. White
 - b. Hispanic or Latino
 - c. Black or African American
 - d. Native American or American Indian
 - e. Asian / Pacific Islander
 - f. Other (please specify)

6. What year in school are you?
 - a. Freshman
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior

7. What grade do you expect to receive in EHRD 315?
 - a. A
 - b. B
 - c. C
 - d. F

8. What is the average number of hours per week you spend on EHRD 315?
 - a. 0-2
 - b. 3-5
 - c. 6-8
 - d. 9+

9. How many online classes have you taken at Texas A&M?
 - a. 1-2
 - b. 3-4
 - c. 5-6
 - d. 7+

10. How many online classes have you taken in your college career?
 - a. 1-2
 - b. 3-4

c. 5-6

d. 7+

Section 2: Online Student Engagement Scale (OSE)

Think about your experience with and time spent in EHRD 315 this semester. How do the following behaviors, thoughts, and feelings describe you in relation to EHRD 315?

Please respond to each statement using the following scale:

1- Not at all characteristic of me

2- Not really characteristic of me

3- Moderately characteristic of me

4- Characteristic of me

5- Very characteristic of me

1. Making sure to study on a regular basis
2. Putting forth effort
3. Staying up on the readings
4. Looking over class notes between getting online to make sure I understand the material
5. Being organized
6. Taking good notes over readings, PowerPoints, or video lectures
7. Listening/reading carefully
8. Finding ways to make the course material relevant to my life
9. Applying course material to my life
10. Finding ways to make the course interesting to me
11. Really desiring to learn the material
12. Having fun in online chats, discussions or via email with the instructor or other students

13. Participating actively in small-group discussion forums
14. Helping fellow students
15. Getting a good grade
16. Doing well on the tests/quizzes
17. Engaging in conversations online (chat, discussions, email)
18. Posting in the discussion forum regularly
19. Getting to know other students in the class

Spring 2019 Engagement Survey

Section 1: Demographics

11. What is your age? _____
12. What is your major? _____
13. What is your current employment status?
 - a. Full-time employment
 - b. Part-time employment
 - c. Unemployed
 - d. Self-employed
 - e. Student
14. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other (please specify)
15. What is your ethnicity?
 - a. White
 - b. Hispanic or Latino
 - c. Black or African American
 - d. Native American or American Indian
 - e. Asian / Pacific Islander
 - f. Other (please specify)
16. What year in school are you?
 - a. Freshman

- b. Sophomore
- c. Junior
- d. Senior

17. What grade do you expect to receive in EHRD 315?

- a. A
- b. B
- c. C
- d. F

18. What is the average number of hours per week you spend on EHRD 315?

- a. 0-2
- b. 3-5
- c. 6-8
- d. 9+

19. How many online classes have you taken at Texas A&M?

- a. 1-2
- b. 3-4
- c. 5-6
- d. 7+

20. How many online classes have you taken in your college career?

- a. 1-2
- b. 3-4
- c. 5-6
- d. 7+

Section 2: Online Student Engagement Scale (OSE)

Think about your experience with and time spent in EHRD 315 this semester. How do the following behaviors, thoughts, and feelings describe you in relation to EHRD 315?

Please respond to each statement using the following scale:

- 1- Not at all characteristic of me
- 2- Not really characteristic of me
- 3- Moderately characteristic of me
- 4- Characteristic of me
- 5- Very characteristic of me

- 20. Making sure to study on a regular basis
- 21. Putting forth effort
- 22. Staying up on the readings
- 23. Looking over class notes between getting online to make sure I understand the material
- 24. Being organized
- 25. Taking good notes over readings, PowerPoints, or video lectures
- 26. Listening/reading carefully
- 27. Finding ways to make the course material relevant to my life
- 28. Applying course material to my life
- 29. Finding ways to make the course interesting to me
- 30. Really desiring to learn the material
- 31. Having fun in online chats, discussions or via email with the instructor or other students
- 32. Participating actively in small-group discussion forums
- 33. Helping fellow students

34. Getting a good grade
35. Doing well on the tests/quizzes
36. Engaging in conversations online (chat, discussions, email)
37. Posting in the discussion forum regularly
38. Getting to know other students in the class

Section 3: Qualitative Questions regarding Student Experiences in Second Life

1. Did you feel like the Second Life captivate training adequately prepared you for your case study assignments? Was there anything that you were confused by? How could the initial training have been improved to better suit your needs as a learner in EHRD 315?
2. During your Second Life training and case study assignments, did you have any technology issues? If you did, what were they and how did you handle them?
3. Within the context of EHRD 315, do you feel like the use of Second Life helped or hindered your learning?
4. How can the skills you learned through the Second Life case studies be applied to your future career?