

Practicing Learner-Centered Teaching: Pedagogical Design and Assessment of a Second Life Project

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ABSTRACT

Guided by the principles of learner-centered teaching methodology, a Second Life project is designed to engage students in active learning of virtual commerce through hands-on experiences and teamwork in a virtual environment. More importantly, an assessment framework is proposed to evaluate the learning objectives and learning process of the Second Life project. The assessment framework is composed of a variety of items, such as reflection essays, chat transcripts, peer evaluations, and a post project survey that measures the learning motive, attitudes, level of difficulty, and the time used to complete the project. The Second Life project was implemented in an MBA-IS course in which thirty-two students were randomly assigned to eight teams. In Second Life, each team managed an avatar and completed a series of business-related activities. The assessment outcomes indicated that students were able to apply what they learned in class into the virtual environment through their exploration and interaction. Students were motivated to learn in the Second Life project and felt that the engaging experiences helped with their learning. On average, students developed a positive attitude toward Second Life and felt that the application was not difficult to use. Lessons learned, recommendations for design issues, and implications for educators are also discussed.

Keywords: Learner-center teaching, Virtual world, Second Life, MBA education, Information Systems (IS)