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Interviewing in a Virtual World

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Life Lessons in a Virtual World

It can make your hands sweat. It can cause butterflies in your stomach. It is nerve wracking. And it can change your life. It’s been compared to a game and you’ve got to know the rules. But it can be a hard game to practice for. It is the job interview. Finding friends who have the time to help can be difficult. Practicing in real settings is challenging, because the applicant has little control over the where and when of an interview. Employment interview preparation can boost the confidence and performance of students and job seekers when they interview (Hansen, Oliphant, Oliphant & Hansen, 2009). Second Life and virtual worlds can provide college graduates or anyone looking for a job the opportunity to practice job interviews. For a career service center, job skills class or job skills center, having the ability to schedule interviews in a virtual world setting can cut down on the need for outside resources. It can also allow teachers or job center directors an environment for students to practice specific types of interviews, choose the right interviewing outfit, practice the art of salary negotiation and receive feedback on all aspects of the job interview.

Second Life provides the opportunity for unlimited practice in the various types of interviews—the referral interview, the screening interview, and the selection interview, as well as the multiple forms of interviews such as directed interviews, unstructured interviews, stress interviews, group interviews and telephone interviews (Lamarre, 2006). Interview situations in Second Life can be approached from two different perspectives. Specific types and forms of interviews can be posted and students can schedule the interviews in which they need practice. In the real world, when an interviewee does not receive a job offer he rarely knows why he didn’t get the job. In a virtual setting job offers can be posted and each candidate can have feedback as to how he or she did on the interview. The other approach to gaining an interview is through networking—another hard concept for job candidates to practice. Networking involves “campaigning” for a job interview when a person doesn’t know if a position is even available. Social gatherings, whether specifically designed for job interviews or just within the casual realm of Second Life, can provide networking practice.

In the real world many job applicants have issues when it comes to dressing professionally and appropriately for a job interview. These issues include knowledge of proper attire for the specific interview and affordability of the appropriate attire. Second Life eliminates the affordability issue. This allows applicants to focus on learning and choosing proper professional attire.

The virtual nervousness of Second Life simulates the real nervousness of live interviews—especially for users new to the virtual experience. However, this virtual nervousness will diminish as the new generation of learners and job candidates enter the virtual world. These are the avatars who are used to the virtual world with their exposure to video games. Second Life will not lose its usefulness to these users. The interview practice arena will become the actual interview arena for the job candidates of the future, reducing and eliminating the cost of traveling expenses for companies pursing global employees.

This paper has attempted to provide just one example of how the virtual world can be used for educational purposes. Through structured seminars and informal social gatherings, the virtual world of Second Life can teach students a variety of life lessons.

References

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