Dr. Sue Gregory: Virtual worlds for engaging activities

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Hi, I am Sue Gregory and I'm in the School of Education at the University of New England, Chair of Research and in ICT Education.

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So, what I want to talk to you about today is my role as a lecturer in ICT Education and what tools I might use to engage students in their learning.

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Now, because we are focusing on teaching K-12 students, we would use a virtual world that's appropriate to them.

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Now, the virtual world -- I mean there are hundreds and hundreds that can be explored.

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And I have been using Second Life, which is, you know, at the 12 years of age, but I only use that because the skills you learn there are transferable to any virtual world.

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So, the types of things we use a virtual world for is to look at any of your discipline areas and to teach students using a virtual environment where the students can log on with an avatar, which they can create to their own desires and look at how they can learn different areas.

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So, for example, we might go to an art gallery and look at the artworks of Leonardo Da Vinci or we go through to the Louvre and have a look at all, you know, David – the statue of David and, you know, just different artwork.

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So, you can actually be immersed in that environment.

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The Sistine Chapel has been replicated in an exact form of what it's like and people that I have taken there said it's just like the real thing, so that's quite interesting.

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Science is really a wonderful way to learn in the virtual world.

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You can use simulations and you can trial things without actually bringing anyone to harm or hurting environments and things like that.

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PE, ICT education, English, Geography, they're all areas of places where you can go to worlds or lanes, which other universities have created for our use.

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And the fun thing that I want to talk about is that it's a really ideal place for the people with special needs where they can be included in the learning where they don't have to worry about real life issues and people that may not be so nice to them.

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So, anyway, a virtual world is a great place to explore with your students and I found that those that do take on that challenge are totally immersed and engaged in the environment.

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Thank you and good luck and if you want any help, please ask me.

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Sue Gregory, look me up on the website.