# **Blended Learning and Art Education**

# **Experimental Learning: Developing a Community of Learners**

# **Mrs Jenny Grenfell, Senior Lecturer in Education**

[Start transcript]

**[Jenny]**

[Slide 1]

Experimental learning means that students and the facilitator or lecturer work together in a collaborative way, which means that what I’m looking at, is developing a community of learners. And in everything that I do, the student is at the centre of that idea of learning. And it’s individual learning, but it’s also collaborative learning as well. So I see myself developing a community of learners in the units in which I teach. I work in art education.

[Slide 2]

So, ask yourself the question: 'What is the most memorable and rewarding participatory art-teaching-and-learning experience you have ever taken?' Take out 'art teaching and learning' and think of your own subject area.

[Slide 3]

For me the answer is: combining online delivery of educational content with the best features of classroom interaction and live instruction to personalised learning, allow thoughtful reflection and differentiate instruction from student to student and across a diverse range of learners.

[Slides 4 and 5]

So what I’ve done is to make a blended learning model, which takes located learning which is face-to-face, online teaching and learning in the Cloud. And what I’ve added also, is, I’ve developed a 3D 'virtual world' in which students derive their own avatars and work in this simulation world—which is in Second Life. And all that comes together to develop this creative community of learners. So the focus for me is on the students and the art educator, and the learning environment, which is located, online and virtual.

And the thing I really need to emphasise is that I may initiate areas and ideas and the content. But what I want to happen is for students to take ownership of those learning experiences. And very often, working with students you’ll find there’ll be aspects of the area we are working in that I haven’t considered, but students bring it up. And so we incorporate that into the learning experience. So that I’m not the font of knowledge; *we* are a collaborative group, who are learning together.

[Slides 6–13]

And so some of these things that I’m just flipping through are some of the experiments that we’ve played with. In the unit that these examples have come from, what I’m wanting to do is to develop digital literacies. Most of the students are education students. They need to be very familiar with using technologies, in developing arts education experiences for the students. But they have to develop an expertise at their own level. So all of these activities that we are doing, engage them with using different media, techniques, materials, which they can then apply to their own practice, but also to developing as art educators. I’ve included some material: we use a lot of online materials where some of my off-campus students ... you can see this is a blog that one of my students has developed. So we have traditional art making but he’s also used a whole range of other technologies as well.

[Slides 14–15]

We participate in field trips. You can see here, we explored Hosier Lane and a whole range of other areas, not only art galleries, but other environments as well. And then we went back into the *Second Life* world where we developed some simulations. And you can see this is a simulated street in a precinct in *Second Life*.

[Slides 16–21]

All of our study materials are online. That’s an example of one of the units that students work with that has images, videos, text, discussion forums, and interactive activities. Students use discussion spaces to develop their own online websites and they develop their own portfolios; they go into Second Life; they develop virtual art galleries of their work. They can access, as you can see here, the study materials that are online, while they’re working in Second Lifeat the computer. They also develop their own websites, which become part of the assessment. And what’s happening is that the classroom activities that they engage with, then become something they can use in classrooms for developing lessons, and things like that. Just a couple of little photos—that’s the learning environment that we built in *Second Life* that is the ‘Deakin Art Education Island’ in *Second Life*.

[Slides 22–27]

There are some of my students. I’ll introduce myself ‘Belle Shan’, that’s my avatar that I work with when I’m in Second Life. Students develop virtual art exhibitions of their work which you’ll see in a couple of minutes. As you can see here, that’s all student work. What they do is they work in a collaborative way with each other to set up their exhibitions of their work in a virtual gallery. And this was a virtual portfolio of student work and that was set up—she designed and developed her exhibition space that was used as part of her assessment task.

[End transcript]