Student Behaviors In a Virtual Reality-Based Clinical Setting: Lessons Learned

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Description

- Cohort of 19 nursing students participated in a series of virtual learning experiences using “Second Life” as part of clinical course post-conference activities for the purpose of evaluating live versus virtual experiences and opportunities.
- Student activities included participation in orientation session, two virtual simulation scenarios and three “hot topic” discussion forums using guest speakers from around the globe.
- Technology Assistant role was created to assist students with activities such as maneuvering and communicating the virtual environment.
- During the course of the experience, Technology Assistant role evolved to include classroom management for virtual setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of Behavior in Virtual Reality</th>
<th>Reason Why Potential Distraction for Learners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chewing gum into headsets</td>
<td>Sound is amplified through headset</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laughing during learning sessions</td>
<td>Others unable to determine reason for laughter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avatar falling asleep</td>
<td>Appears the person is uninterested. However, avatars take “sleeping” position after periods of inactivity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unprofessional Appearance</td>
<td>Appears contrary to reality professional appearance. Examples: horse head for face, camouflage clothing, small child avatar</td>
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</tbody>
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Actual Role of Technology Assistant
- Assist students with virtual environment
- Assist with supporting quality learning environment by minimizing distractions

Student Learning Activities
- Distracting behaviors in virtual environment encountered

Anticipated Role of Technology Assistant
- Assist students with virtual environment

Conclusion
- Virtual reality offers diverse learning opportunities for nursing students.
- Participants in virtual reality may not be aware of how distractions affect quality of learning environment.
- Role of Technology Assistant can be extremely beneficial for assisting students with technology and optimal learning environments.
- Recommend establishing group norms for virtual environment.
- Further study required to determine virtual reality effectiveness in education.
- Further study required regarding avatar appearance and professionalism.