

# Second Life Guide for SL-moderators

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**Welcome to Second Life (<http://secondlife.com/>)**

'We believe it's the best environment to experience and practise in and as you will see there are masses of good resources to help you. Please make a start using this guide and complete it before your online group practice.'

Gilly & Matthew

## **Objectives of the SL-moderators Training Course**

These are to:

- provide an introduction to SL and enable you to acquire and inhabit your avatar
- provide an introduction to SL- moderating practice
- encourage you to prepare your own programme to develop further your SL-moderating skills

You may have other objectives.

For the skills we encourage you to acquire, please see the draft competencies chart in the appendix.

Second Life is an online, 3-D Virtual World, sometimes referred to as a Multi-User Virtual Environment (MUVE), imagined and created entirely by its residents. Since opening to the public in 2003, it has continued to grow and is now 'inhabited' by millions of residents from around the globe. We have prepared this guide with our best knowledge as teachers and researchers in other online environments.

## **About this guide**

This training guide has been split into three parts.

- Part 1 takes you through your first steps in achieving a Second Life by setting up your account and creating your avatar (your virtual persona in *Second Life*).

- Part 2 reminds you of the basic skills you require to operate in *Second Life* and enjoy the experience.
- Part 3 is about taking part in groups for learning in *Second Life*.

## **PART ONE: ACHIEVING A SECOND LIFE**

Before you can start living your *Second Life* you need to set up your account and download the software onto your machine. The following link provides an overview to the entire process; each step has its own resource:

### **1.1 Creating an account**

You can create and online through the *Second Life* website. The process can take up to 10 minutes. Be ready to choose a name for your avatar (which cannot be changed), bearing in mind that you will be using it for learning and teaching purposes. Your choice of surname is restricted from a set list; these will be offered to you as you register. You will need to have access to your email account as you will be sent an activation email.

### **1.2 Downloading the software**

You need to download software (this is called 'client software') onto your machine to run *Second Life* through your broadband Internet connection. You can download it for your PC or Mac direct from *Second Life*.

### **1.3 Installing the Software**

Installing the software is quite quick depending upon your machine specifications. You can find information on the minimum systems requirements visit on the under download on the *Second Life* website. Please make sure that you have administrative permission (if required in your institution) on the PC you wish to use before you begin the installation.

### **1.4 Logging On**

To log unto second life make sure you have you second life name and password read. Enter this information in the boxes provided and click submit.

### **1.5 Orientation Island**

This is the first island (environment) you encounter in *Second Life*. It has been designed to teach you the basic skills required to move, interact and engage in *Second Life*. Once you have acquired these skills and you choose to leave Orientation Island please be aware that you cannot return there! There are four basic skills required to enable you to leave Orientation Island. An on-screen tutorial will guide you through the stages to acquire these skills: be prepared to spend 30 minutes on this process.

### **1.6 Getting Help**

Getting help is easy both in these initial stages and once inside the *Second Life* environment itself. You can find more information on the support in Second Life page. There is also a whole complex in *Second Life* ready to help known as "Help Island". You can ask your fellow avatars, they are usually forthcoming with useful advice.

## Part TWO: OPERATING IN SECOND LIFE

At this stage you should have successfully set up your account, downloaded the software and acquired the basic skills on Orientation Island. Part 2 of the guide will help you practise some of the key skills required to live productively in *Second Life*.

### 2.1 Familiarisation with the Media Zoo

This is one of the first things you should do upon leaving Orientation Island. You can watch the short Youtube video (<http://youtube.com/watch?v=y7TMOzzFFdQ>) but for a real experience (even in a virtual environment!) there is nothing like actually visiting the Media Zoo Island itself: <http://slurl.com/secondlife/Media%20Zoo/170/150/17>

### 2.2 Tool Bars

Tool Bars in *Second Life* can be found at the top and bottom of the screen. We focus on the 'Bottom Bar' as these are useful shortcuts. It consists of the following buttons:

- **IM** – opens the Instant Message panel. If you have any unread instant message from other Second Life residents, you'll see their names on tabs along the bottom of the panel. Click on the tabs to read the instant message from the named resident.
- **Chat** – opens the chat box for typing text, but pressing the Enter key is much simpler and has the same effect.
- **Friends** – opens a panel listing all the Second Life people who've agreed to be your friend and tells you who is currently online. It acts as a small administrative tool for common Second Life actions such as sending instant messages and offering teleports to your current location.
- **Fly** – is quite useful despite the convenient keyboard shortcuts (F=Fly, E=Up, C=Down). Clicking on it to stop flying will let you watch an animation of your avatar falling for a hard landing!
- **Snapshot** – opens the Snapshot Preview panel for taking snaps of the virtual world. Set all the options, such as snapshot size, resolution, image quality etc.
- **Build** – opens the Build panel, and it's active only if the land you're on allows building a sandbox area or your own land.
- **Mini-Map** - opens a mini-map, it can be useful when trying to find your way to somewhere, or in busy, crowded areas such as commercial or entertainment complexes.

- **Map** – opens a resizable map of the SL world. It includes search functions and is an interface for instant travel; double clicking on any spot teleports your avatar to that location.
- **Inventory** – opens the Inventory panel and shows your content “i.e. things that belong to you and you can use. CTRL + I is the shortcut.

### **2.3 Movement**

Movement is not restricted in *Second Life*, you can walk, run and use vehicles just as in real-life but you can also fly. If you are new to *Second Life*, movement is a tricky but important skill and needs practice and patience.

### **2.4 Communicating**

Communication in *Second Life* is made easier with people generally being friendlier than in real life. There are various methods for communicating, but for the purposes of this guide we'll stick to text and audio.

- **Text** communication is in the form of synchronous chat, by typing in the field and pressing 'Enter' you can have a conversation with avatars around you. This is limited to about a 20 metre radius. There is also the ability to Instant Message avatars so they receive messages even if they are not online at the same time as you.
- **Audio** communication is rather new to *Second Life* and is marginally used at present, but is a powerful tool. You need to change some settings and have access to some speakers and a microphone in order to take advantage.

### **2.5 Searching**

Searching is an important skill you need for exploring fully the opportunities available to you in *Second Life*. There are various ways to search, but remember to choose the correct tab from the search options, as you can search for groups, people, places, classifieds, etc.

### **2.6 Inventory**

This is your storage system in *Second Life* where note cards, landmarks, clothes and objects are all stored. It is important to keep this organised because the more places you visit and the more objects you interact with the more information you will be offered.

### **2.7 Objects**

Objects are common in *Second Life*, and most are interactive. You can tell by hovering your cursor over the object and it will tell you to either left or right click (Mac equivalent is 'Command' Click). This will bring up the Pie Menu which can differ depending upon the objects.

### **2.8 Identity**

The identity of your avatar is very important in *Second Life*. When you first register you will have chosen from a set list of appearances. If you'd like to change your appearance at any time you can find information from the HELP page. Your profile can also be developed. If you right click on any avatar you can view its profile from the Pie Menu.

## **2.9 Teleporting & Landmarks**

Teleporting and landmark are useful skills to develop. If you come across a useful place then save it as a 'Landmark' for easy return journeys. Teleporting to and from places saves a lot of travel time. If you visit the Media Zoo Island, for example, there are interactive maps that allow you to teleport across the island so this is not just something to be used when moving around or between different islands.

## **2.10 Snapshots**

This is the term used when you want to take pictures of your activities in *Second Life*. Using the camera controls you can be very creative in taking a variety of different snapshots.

## **2.11 Camera Controls**

Camera control enables you to view objects and avatars around you as well as to take close up snapshots. As you begin to increase your skills in *Second Life* you will find more and more benefits to using this tool.

## **2.12 Events**

Many events take place in *Second Life*. It is important that you spend the time engaging with some of these different events before you start to facilitate your own.

## **2.13 Code of Conducts**

We point you to the computer codes of conduct, but of course you must expect to behave across the board as you would in any learning or social environments. Bear in mind that harassment and non-discrimination policies also apply to code of conduct.

## **2.14 Some SL-netiquette from experience:**

What's special about *Second Life* is that each individual can represent themselves as an avatar in the way they wish. Demanding that they tell you who they really are, why they have chosen to represent themselves in a particular way, why they have chosen a particular name and so on is considered inappropriate (however curious you are). It's a great lesson in tolerance for us all to relate to others as they choose to show themselves.

## **2.15 Some minimum rules for everyone:**

*The Second Life* developers, a company called Linden Labs, have outlined their own terms and conditions for using their software. The rules and

etiquette in *Second Life* are similar to those in other environments: there are "Community Standards", or, looked at another way, six cardinal sins, which, if you commit any of them, may result in your account being suspended or terminated.

- **Intolerance:** just like in real life, being derogatory or demeaning with regard to another person's race, ethnicity, gender, religion or sexual orientation is a big no-no.
- **Harassment:** can take many forms in a virtual world, but the forms have a common denominator: someone gets upset. If you see your actions or words are upsetting someone, stop.
- **Assault:** this includes pushing, shooting and shoving another *Second Life* resident.
- **Disclosure:** information about another resident can be freely shared only if it is displayed in the resident's profile or if you have the affected resident's consent to share extra information. This includes residents' real life data as well as their conversation logs with their prior consent.
- **Indecency:** if what you want to do can be offensive to other people do it on private land in matured areas.
- **Disturbing the peace:** don't be a pest. Every resident is entitled to an enjoyable, peaceful *Second Life*.

## PART THREE: SL-MODERATING

### 3.1 About *Second Life*-moderating

We use the term 'moderating' to include:

1. welcoming and encouraging
2. hosting
3. teaching and tutoring
4. group facilitating
5. enabling, coaching and developing.

### 3.2 *Groups in Second Life*

There are two motives for groups of people to work together. One is self-interest and the other common interest. The first can be promoted through extrinsic factors, such as incentives, but the second needs trust and mutual respect. So from the start *Second Life* moderators need to seek a climate of strong enhancement of the well-being of the *Second Life* group, based on respect and support for each other's avatars rather than corner cutting in the service of instrumental personal goals. In this way, intrinsic motivators will gradually emerge and learning be promoted.

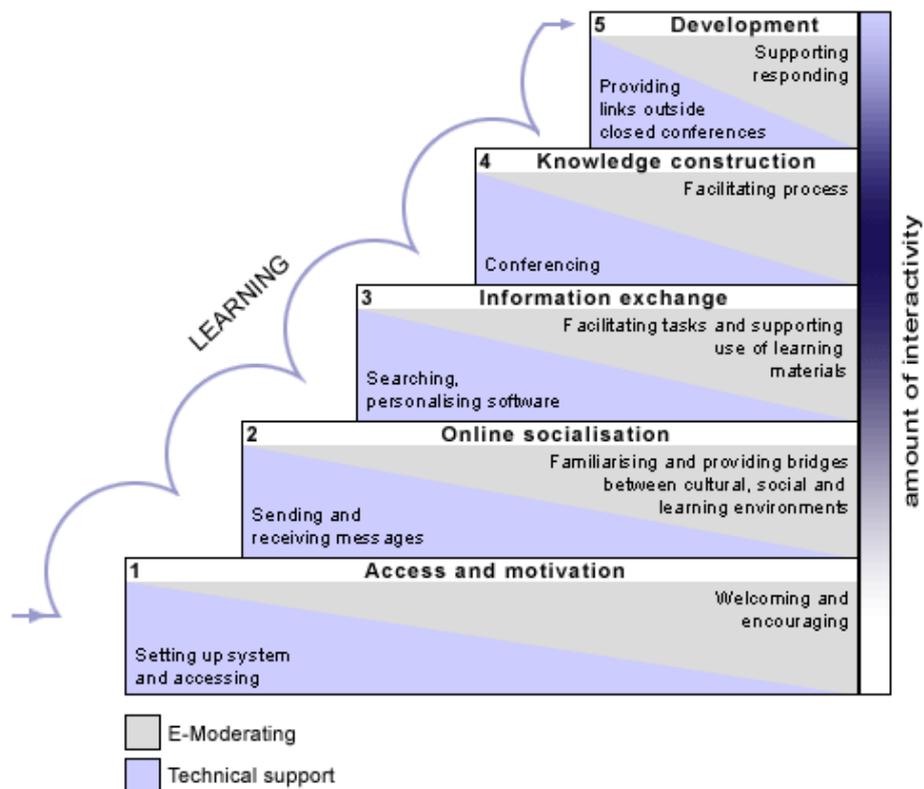
Some SL-moderators assume that varying cultural backgrounds and experiences from participants result in very different approaches to learning and try to adapt their moderating accordingly. But it is extremely difficult to get to know and understand someone else's culture and attempts to do this can result in unhelpful stereotypical views. Instead we hope that in SL where each individual is represented as an avatar it will be easier to promote interest and respect for the backgrounds of all participants. What we know about SL so far is that avatars are very adaptable and able to respond to challenges and new opportunities. Our aim is to build a 'third culture' within SL which values different perspectives and strokes.

### 3.3 Structuring group work

Any group, whether in real or *Second Life*, needs structure to help the members work together. Structured and paced activities within the framework of a 'scaffold' reduce the amount of *Second Life* moderators' time and increase student learning outcomes. Both structures that we use have been developed in different kinds of online environments compared to *Second Life* therefore part of our research is to test them.

We use two structures and a set of guidelines:

3.3.1 The **five stage model** has 15 key components, three at each stage:



Gilly Salmon, *All Things in Moderation*, <<http://www.atimod.com/e-tivities/5stage.shtml>>

- Technical understanding of the platform enough to use it for an activity

- Benefits for learning
- Benefits for moderating

### *3.3.2 Key features of SL-tivities*

SL-tivity stands for Second Life learning activities. The key features are:

- A small piece of information, stimulus or challenge (the 'spark')
- Online activity which includes individual avatars posting a contribution
- An interactive or participative element such as responding to the contributions of others
- Summary, feedback or critique from an SL-moderator.

Guidelines for SL-tivities:

- Run with groups of 4-6 initially (at least till everyone gains experience and confidence), building up to larger group 'plenaries' as you would in a face to face seminar or workshop
- Always leave time for offering feedback to the whole group
- Make arrangements for who can speak when
- Make the time clear and how the activities will be paced and managed
- If small groups go off to other parts of the island, encourage this but ask them to let you know where they are and let them have a time to be back with the main group.

### **3.4 Key SL-moderating skills**

Moderators need four key skills to enable the SL group work to succeed. They take some practice. Participants can also usefully acquire these skills but moderators need to demonstrate them first.

#### *3.4.1 Group building*

Task aims for SL-moderators include those of a pastoral or remedial nature, such as:

- Recognizing when students' avatars are in difficulties
- Checking for misunderstandings
- Reassuring and encouraging slower or less vocal learners.

Group maintenance includes:

- Creating a sense of belonging
- Generating a sense of trust and openness
- Handling conflict in a constructive way
- Establishing a spirit of cooperation
- Creating interest in, commitment to and enthusiasm for the subject and learning more about it, all of which contribute to a student's engagement and willingness to learn.

#### *3.4.2 Weaving*

The purpose of 'weaving' is to extract and then pull together contributions from different participants and re-present them for examination by the group.

#### *3.4.3 Summarising*

The purposes of summarising are to:

- Refocus discussion
- Signal closure
- Acknowledge contributions
- Reinforce and highlight issue
- Provide a 'spark' for a new SL-tivity
- Provide resources for an archive.

In SL, the advantage of using text chat is that you can cut and paste the whole group interchange from the SL text chat box into a word document for summarising later.

How to summarize:

- Collect all relevant messages into one document (copy and paste).
- Look through it to identify the most commonly occurring theme and copy one entry that captures this best to the top of the page or precis it in a sentence or three (maximum).
- Delete all references to that theme from the copied messages. Repeat the process until you have all the common themes from the contributions.
- Edit the emerging summary: shorten the sentences, delete all unnecessary material.

- Add further information if you wish, such as:
  - individual participants' contributions that add fresh ideas or look at the topic in an interesting way
  - your teaching comments or critique, and point out omissions, other perspectives or applications, making reference to further literature or ideas
  - a short further example of your own if necessary
  - a question or reflection for further consideration
  - further reading or follow up if appropriate (preferably electronic)
- End with congratulations, praise or a positive note of some kind
- Sign it and post message on the message forum or whatever feedback method you are using.

## Appendix 1

### Draft competencies chart

Stage				
<b>Stg 1</b>	Access	Create & establish avatar  Complete SL orientation	Familiarisation  with and potential	Movement and camera control
	Motivation	How to get help	Take part as learner  in a SL course	Scaffolding, 5 stage model and SL-tivities
<b>Stg 2</b>	<b>Socialisation</b>			
	Group	How to create groups  Understanding differences and  uses of text and audio (proximity) in SL	Explore issues of SL identity and interaction	Key remote synchronous group establishment skills
	Environment	Codes of conduct	Choose and prepare seminar location	Choose and prepare SL-tivities on SL specialness
<b>Stg3</b>	Benefits to topic	Visits to other islands/locations	Search and present skills	
	<b>Information Xchange</b>			
	SL-tivities	Using SL resources  e.g. ppt presentations	Designing a SL-Xchange e-tivity, purposefulness	Practising key SL moderation skills
	Weaving & Feedback	Enabling learning in SL groups		
<b>Stg 4</b>	Summarising	Enabling learning in SL groups		
	<b>Knowledge Construction</b>			
	Weaving	Capture of text audio and chats	Summarising	Giving feedback and encouragement

Stg 5	Closing	
	<b>Development &amp; Building</b>	Evaluation, feedback and suggestions,
	Enabling	
	Reflecting	
	Evaluating	

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