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# Virtual worlds as 3-dimensional Learning Environments: A comparison of two 'Inter-Life' scenarios in different Educational settings.

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## Introduction

- The role of novel technologies in enhanced learning across settings, including schools and higher education is receiving increased attention (Dede, 2009; Ketelhut et al, 2010).
- The interdisciplinary 'Inter-Life' project created two immersive, 3-dimensional virtual world islands (Lally et al, 2009; Magill et al, 2009).
- Inter-Life Island 1 (ILI-1) was established for young adults (>18 years of age) and Inter-Life Island 2 (ILI-2) for young people/adolescents (13–17 years of age).

## Aim

- To investigate the suitability of virtual worlds as a novel technology to support learning of skills required to navigate challenging life transitions through the social, affective and cognitive domains.
- This study involves a comparison of two different learning 'scenarios' that were investigated as part of the 'Inter-Life' project (Figure 1).

## Methods and Findings

### Scenario 1 (ILI-2)

- Series of blended learning workshops (n=12) with young people who had experienced life in Care.
- Young people worked on structured and open learning activities, resulting in formation of a learning community and development of life skills such as; self-confidence, team-work, active problem-solving skills, empathy and leadership skills (Devlin et al, 2011, 2013; Lally & Sclater, 2012) (Figures 1 & 2).

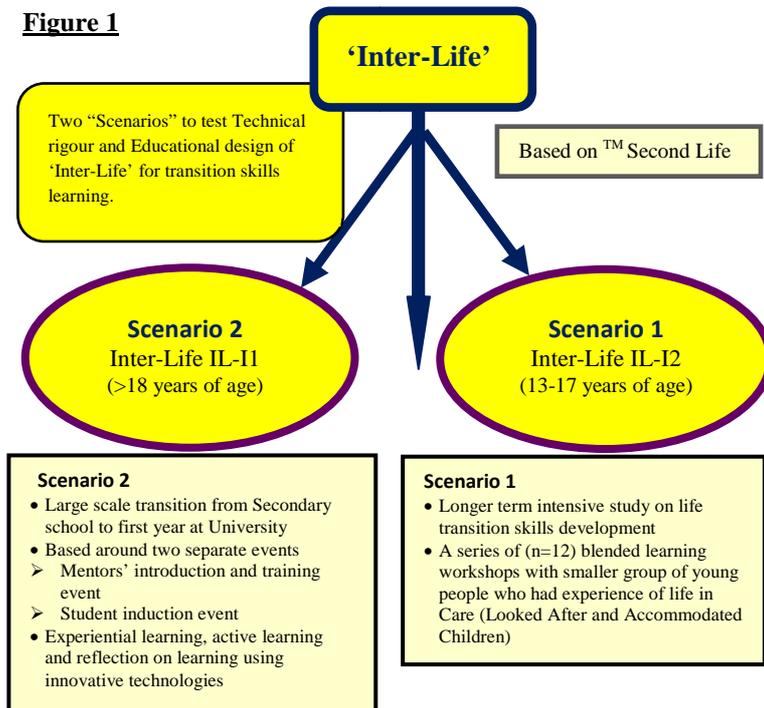
### Scenario 2 (ILI-1)

- Larger scale student induction event in which a cohort (n=36) of B. Tech. Ed. students participated in a creative profiling activity.
- The students creating visual, interactive profile boards for sharing amongst peers and pre-existing (post-transition) students in 'Inter-Life'.
- Results indicated the students found the activity interesting, and enjoyable, but some found it challenging, in keeping with current literature (Devlin et al, 2012; Kennedy et al, 2010) (Figures 1 & 3).



**Figure 2:** Scenario 1: Presentation to peers 'in-world'

**Figure 1**



**Figure 3:** Scenario 2: New student group working in 'Inter-Life'

## Conclusions

Through comparing two different learning scenarios, with different learners working in different settings, this present study has demonstrated 'Inter-Life' is a 'fit for purpose', new technology enhanced learning (TEL) tool. In particular, we have demonstrated:

- (1) The suitability of the Inter-Life educational 'design' in alignment with the technical robustness of this innovative 'TEL' tool that supports autonomous learning and persistent web-based learner generated resources.
- (2) The importance of the synergy between pedagogies and technologies, and how learners from different settings can help shape their own learning through innovative malleable technologies.

## Main references

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2. Lally, V. & Sclater, M. (2012): *Research in Comparative and International Education* (2012) 7(4): pp 482-504.
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