One of the most compelling interests in virtual learning environments research is, I believe, in pursuing ways to advance this research through the incorporation of these virtual environments, themselves, as effective methods for displaying and disseminating evidence of learning. By shooting movies made of virtual learning situations and adding relevant citations and scholarly notes, for example, researchers may compose “annotated machinima” to provide an academic context for the learning milieu characterized by video games, virtual worlds, or augmented reality experiences. Educational researchers investigating virtual learning environments can make use of such records to capture the rich, interconnected, and/or unique affordances and contexts to be found in these virtual situations – something that is difficult and at least more laborious, if not impossible to do when relying on the printed word alone.

Nevertheless, relying on mere words, I’d like take this opportunity to outline two other ways of using virtual learning environments directly as forms of digital scholarship that we’re working on at the University of Oregon’s Center for Learning In Virtual Environments (CLIVE): a virtual research collaboratory and the conduct of “virtual safaris” to systematically elicit the learning potential and context to be found across a variety of virtual learning situations.

The UOregon Center for the Study of Virtual Collaboration, or “collaboratory,” in both Second Life and in Open Wonderland is a means for the research team to practice long term purposeful collaboration in either of two virtual environments in effort to display, share, compare, and contrast their findings within the inquiry settings themselves. By synthesizing research findings into an evolving “pattern language” that corresponds to team identities, collaborative work routines, and virtual ecological conditions within which the teams

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