

Writing Studio Virtual World Survey Summary

We decided to target a relatively small number of students to gain a student experience with virtual worlds and a sense of their initial interest in a writing virtual world environment. The 74 responses represent a variety of groups: four sections of Writing 20 (all freshmen), one section of EDU 170 (sophomores and juniors), and WS tutees (all years).

Only a few of the 74 surveyed have had experience with virtual worlds before. Overall, approximately a quarter of the respondents are not interested in exploring writing in a virtual world environment, 1/2 are somewhat interested in exploring this medium, and 1/3 very interested. About 2/3rds are very or somewhat comfortable with technology.

The two most popular activities would be a real time private chat with a WS tutor and WS writing resources. Next in popularity would be online workshops and group writing projects. Although very few respondents used the survey comment feature, a few strongly worded negative comments indicate that students need to be able to choose whether or not to participate in virtual world activities. Choice, then, should always be part of what is offered.

In conclusion, based on this data, in our pilot program we should focus on first creating a tutor/writer chat feature, then increased accessibility of writing resources, then online workshops, and finally group writing spaces. We can add additional features later on.