

# **DM3281: Thesis Analysis**

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# Executive Summary

## Objective

Users participate in 3D immersive environments for many different reasons. Some create and sell things, some explore and interact with what has been created, while others still, seek to teach and learn – and of course not all groups are mutually exclusive. Unlike many, I have little interest in the commerce of 3D environments, and instead I am drawn to the educational and experiential aspects of this medium. Therefore, with my thesis project I explored how best to leverage the distinct “interactions” a 3D immersive environment can provide and developed new ways to deliver educational content.

## Goal

My original goal was a bit amorphous with respect to exactly what I would choose to teach, and ultimately create, for this project. Initially I contemplated creating a number of unrelated spaces, each with separate topics. After some initial conceptual work, and laying out of the space(s), I realized it would ultimately serve my objective better if I created a number of micro-items which all taught parts of a greater, singular, macro-topic. As such, my goal became to translate the materials and concepts I currently use to teach abstract topics in xHTML and CSS for web development (in face-to-face and web based courses) into 3D immersive experiences that offer new ways to reach and engage the participants who use them.

## Solution

I created an “HTML Village”, within Second Life®, a 3D immersive environment, to teach some of the more abstract concepts that I find my students, and others, sometimes have difficulty understanding. This 3D immersive space allowed me to develop “exhibits” of 9 key concepts and provide different ways for a participant to explore and interact both with and *in* the topic. Each exhibit is laid out along a path and builds the users knowledge base along the way until they reach the end where they see – and more importantly *understand* – a complete, well structured, properly executed web document. Project Deliverables

1. One 3D immersive space, built in Linden Labs Second Life Platform, with 9 exhibits developed to teach abstract concepts web development with xHTML and CSS.  
Before a user can access the space they must send me an email (shemidamureaux@gmail.com) and provide me with the name of their avatar.
2. A web site (as a blog or wiki) that chronicles both my research about teaching and learning in immersive spaces and my production of the immersive space(s).  
- <http://www.sethmerriam.net/dmthesis/>
3. A digital-short (movie) which displays/describes/advertises the space(s) for those who outside of the immersive environment. This movie is both embedded on the web site/blog, and prepared as a DVD.