The Schome project aims to propose a new, cradle to grave model of education for the information age, drawing on evidence from a range of sources including learning theory, socio-cultural activity theory and educational research, informing a social, cultural and psychological analysis to develop a united conceptual framework. Recently the project has focused on 13-17 year olds working through a network of forums, wiki, bliki and 2 islands in Second Life.

In the session illustrated here the figure leading the discussion at the front is a child, whilst two of the seated avatars are adult staff members. This is a governance meeting to negotiate how the community should function in Second Life.

Within the Schome community anyone with the confidence in their subject can propose and execute a teaching session. The technology enables a break from the traditional, hierarchical teaching structure.

Traditional distance learning is often located in an instructional, isolationist model, with a central predication on the delivery of information from teacher (expert) to student (learner). There are significant indications that the engagement of technology for communication among the Schome community of learners has empowered individuals of all ages to take a situated constructivist approach to their own learning.

The Schome project is now working with adults on the main Second Life grid to extend our understanding of this new model of education. With further exploration we can provide a sustainable model for education in the information age.

All communication within the community is logged wherever possible. These logs are currently providing extensive data for analysis. A significant result from the project to date has been the engagement of young people who have felt otherwise excluded from many of their peer group in their traditional learning environment, for example those who register on the autistic spectrum have reflected that they are empowered by the freedom of their participation in the online environment.