

Submit Grant Proposal | VR@Illinois

Submitted by:

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1. Name

Emma Hoyer

2. Email

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3. Your Status

Graduate Student

4. Your Department

Curriculum and Instruction: DELTA

5. Provide a brief summary of the VR/AR project that would be funded by this grant proposal

My fifth grade classroom is full of students who come from low socio-economic backgrounds. As we study history and science and learn strategies to navigate informational texts, I want them to have immersive experiences. Many of the topics we talk about are not ones that they have background knowledge for, nor can they afford to travel to these places or access the knowledge on a personal level. Given funding, I want to develop a set of lessons that tie in with fifth grade Illinois social studies standards, as well as the 5th grade, Common Core writing standards. This project would marry the immersive capabilities of VR and the need to educate students about the history of the United States and the world around them. It would also allow students to, in turn, have the capability to develop and create educational, VR experiences around their community and lived experiences to contribute to the growing resources in the VR world. The resources needed to fulfill this vision include smartphones to be used (to bridge equity issues) in a small group setting (no more than 5 to be shared amongst the class), two additional inexpensive VR headsets to flesh out the number to a typical, elementary small group, and potential in-app purchases depending on content available in developed VR apps. The content accessed would chiefly be visual storytelling VR, to be used to educate, practice visual literacy skills, immerse the students in a cultural setting not their own, and model what students will then have the ability to create themselves.

6. How much funding are you requesting?

\$5000

7. Provide a brief preliminary budget of how the funds would be used

No more than \$3000 will be used for the purchase of smartphones. The particular model has yet to be determined, and will be determined once the funding is secured. Budget-friendly yet effective models are in consideration, which should actually place the cost around \$2500. However, up to

\$3000 may need to be allocated depending on charging accessories and cases to maintain and protect the phones. \$100 for the purchase of additional VR headsets (3 are already owned) \$250 will be set aside for any in-app purchases that need to be made, considering that in the long-term, more content will be developed and could be used in the classroom. The remainder of the money will be dedicated to a field trip that will allow students to create a VR experience with a small group. Our district does not have funding for this type of extra-curricular opportunity, and raising the money will prove to be difficult given the impoverished status of the communities my students live in. The field trip will be within the Champaign-Urbana community, and will be determined based on student discussion, voting, and planning. They will be the creators and have the agency to determine where they would like to create content to display their place in our world.

8. Describe the anticipated outcomes of your project.

Students will have a greater understanding of the lived experiences of people who lived at different times or live in different places. Being able to experience this perspective is usually done through travel, which is not an experience many of my students get to have. This builds empathy, connection, and helps them to grasp the “why” of the world and people’s actions. Students will also have the chance to create and publish content that can help educate other students about a piece of the world. Their creation seeks to give them agency, reinforce that their voice has value, and allow them to innovate a solution to a problem or offer a unique perspective.

9. What is the proposed timeline for your VR project?

The remainder of the school year once resources have been secured (May 2020 will be when the projects are completed)

10. Additional information

As a grad student in the DELTA program, I want to begin giving students a chance to create content for other students, rather than it coming primarily from adults. This is a small-scale project, but it’s impact can span for years to come, especially in the virtual world.