Mikayla Miller

*Can Virtual Reality Teach Empathy?*

Chris Berdik

  *Can Virtual Reality Teach Empathy?* This article by Chris Berdik details about how

VR, or Virtual Reality, can help students learn about a concept not necessarily taught in

schools. Empathy. One of the main points of the article was about emersion could help

student become more involved in the world today and have my emotional attachment to

people around the world. A quote from the article gave scientific evidence of VR in helping

achieve this "The power of VR to stoke empathy is the focus of research at Stanford's Virtual

Human Interaction Lab, led by communications professor Jeremy Bailenson. In the lab's

"Empathy at Scale" studies,  young people who "wear" an elderly avatar, for example, are

then more inclined to save for retirement.* Some other studies have found that embodying

avatars of other races can reduce racial bias" (Berdik 2017).  The rest of the article is made

up of testimonials from teachers who have tried this style of teaching and had it work. The

teachers collectively agreed that students began to care more.

  I think this is a really fascinating idea and could work in areas not just like the ones

in this article. I do think that this could help increase empathy for students for current

events, but I think the past as well. I believe part of what my generation is missing from

history is the empathy for events that have happened in the past. I was not alive at the time

and therefore I do not have to care. This is not the case because with the past we can make

a better future. Naturally, there would need to be limits to what people should do. I got the

idea of putting students in the situations others had to be put in during times of crisis, but that might be mentally harmful if taken too far. I think VR could go further in what they could teach students. Empathy is not something that is taught in schools because teaching emotion is not what schools are for. However, schools are for improving oneself through knowledge and what better way to understand learn than through personal experience. This article really made me think of possibilities.