

How to use the Virtual Reality Language Learning Lab to teach academic writing structure

Venue: Kyoto University of Foreign Studies

Event Date and Time: January 12th, 2019, 10:00am to 12pm

Presenters Austin Pack and Alex Barrett showcase the Virtual Reality Language Learning Lab (VRLLL), a Virtual Reality Learning Environment (VRLE) uniquely designed and created to teach academic English writing structure. The workshop will introduce the VRLLL through demonstrations and audience participation. Current research on the motivating principles of using the VRLLL will be disseminated along with concepts for future research. Following, the presenters will explain the development process of the VRLLL and how they intend to expand it with additional applications. The workshop not only intends to inform the audience about current research in VRLEs, but also to inspire collaboration.

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Discussion Group Questions:

1. What are some possible benefits/drawbacks of using a VR program in this way?
2. Do you think this program could be useful for Japanese students? Why or why not?
3. Do you think VR learning environments can be useful pedagogical tools or is VR just an expensive, albeit fun toy?
4. How do you think the program could be improved?
5. How else do you think VR could be utilized for teaching language?

Creation Station Instructions:

Imagine your own Virtual Reality Learning Environment.

1. For the first five minutes try to think of a VR program that could be used for the teaching and learning of a language. Use the following questions for guidance.
 - a. Which language would you want to focus on?
 - b. Which of the four skills (reading/writing/listening/speaking) would you focus on?
 - c. What task must students perform in the VR Learning Environment?
 - d. Feel free to use the papers and pens to take notes, draw a sketch, etc.
2. For the final five minutes, take turns sharing your ideas with group.

Example Paragraphs:

Paragraph #1: Social Interaction (Easy difficulty)

Humans are social beings that need interaction with others. Not having social interaction with others often leads to negative feelings and emotions. Evidence suggests that individuals who regularly remain alone for three or more hours at a time are more likely to experience boredom, sadness, and depression. These negative feelings and emotions leave shortly after engaging in social interaction again, suggesting that social beings need interaction with others.

Paragraph #2: A Restaurant's Kitchen (Medium difficulty)

A restaurant's kitchen can be a very busy and chaotic place. To begin with, the kitchen is full of noise. Waiters and waitresses shout orders at the top of their lungs, pot lids clang, and knives chop. Soups sizzle and stove fires roar. In addition to the cacophony of noise there is a lot of motion and moving around. Chefs shuffle from station to station to prepare meals and servers rush in and out of the kitchen to deliver food to patrons. My favorite restaurant is Sam's Salami Sandwiches. Life working in the kitchen never gets dull with this much activity going on.

Paragraph #3: Infant Development (Hard difficulty)

The first year of an infant's life can be divided into three major developmental periods. First, an infant's body needs to learn to live in the world outside their mother. During these first three months babies may smile, track objects with their eyes, grip objects in their hands, and even raise their head and chest when laying face-down. Next, usually during the age of four to six months, babies learn to manipulate the world around them. Expect to see an infant begin to roll over, make sounds, laugh, and sit up. _____

During this period of time babies usually learn to crawl, sit without support, respond to their name, begin feeding themselves, point at objects, and even take their first steps. After one year of age infants often begin to learn words more quickly. It is impressive all the things that infants learn to do in such a short period of time.