



Aligning Virtual Reality Education Programs: Learning Goals and Objectives of the Virtual Constitution

Part of the challenge inherent in using virtual reality in education is integrating it with existing school culture. The seamless integration of virtual reality learning into the curriculum, teacher lesson plans, and school culture is an important goal. New technology, no matter how impressive, does little good if not an integral part of the every-day learning process. Virtual reality learning is flexible, designed in a modular format. It may be used many ways- as a primary resource, supplement to classroom learning, or as a student study aid.

Teachers select virtual reality programs to complement existing curriculum plans. In selecting a particular virtual reality program, teachers identify the learning goals and sub-goals of the program to integrate it into their curriculum plan, where they have similar or identical goals specified.

Example of Virtual reality alignment: The Virtual Constitution

Skill Levels: 6-12; 8 Learning Goals; 42 Learning Objectives

Learning Goal 1: Understand the conditions of life in America in 1787 and the need for the Constitution

- Learning Objective
- 1: Economic Chaos
 - 2: Fighting Between States
 - 3: Weakness of the Articles of Confederation
 - 4: End of the Revolutionary War
 - 5: Exploitation of Farmers
 - 6: Lack of Cooperation Between States
 - 7: Territorial Claims
 - 8: Influence of George Washington
 - 9: Concern for States' Freedom
 - 10: Shay's Rebellion

Learning Goal 2: Understanding Plans for Constitutional Convention

- Learning Objective
- 1: Delegates
 - 2: Virginia Plan

Learning Goal 3: Discovering the Constitutional Convention

- Learning Objective
- 1: Constitutional Debate
 - 2: James Madison

- 3: Ben Franklin
- 4: Thomas Jefferson
- 5: George Washington
- 6: John Adams
- 7: Alexander Hamilton
- 8: Luther Martin
- 9: Edmund Randolph
- 10: New Jersey Plan
- 11: Virginia Plan
- 12: Connecticut Compromise

Learning Goal 4: Understanding the U.S. Constitution:

- Learning Objective
- 1: Congress
 - 2: House of Representatives
 - 3: Senate
 - 4: Bills

Learning Goal 5: Understanding the U.S. Constitution:
Article 2: Executive Branch

- Learning Objective
- 1: President
 - 2: Age Restriction
 - 3: Treaties
 - 4: Appointment of Judges
 - 5: State of the Union

Learning Goal 6: Understanding the U.S. Constitution:
Article 3: Judicial Branch

- Learning Objective
- 1: Supreme Court
 - 2: Judicial Powers

Learning Goal 7: Understanding the U.S. Constitution:
Articles 4-7

- Learning Objective
- 1: Article 4, States
Article 5, Amendments
Article 6, Constitution
Article 7, Ratification

Learning Goal 8: Understanding Constitutional Ideas

- Learning Objective
- 1: Checks and Balances
 - 2: Declaration of Independence
 - 3: Federalism

Applications of Learning: The Virtual Constitution

Solving Problems

The Virtual Constitution assists students in recognizing and investigating problems. Allowing students to explore Constitutional environments on their own leads them to gather information and piece together the issues of problems. In the Virtual Constitution, students explore, gather evidence, and formulate ideas.

Communicating

Students are continuously interpreting information in the Virtual Constitution. Students interpret textual, visual, and auditory information in virtual reality versions of the U.S. in 1787, Independence Hall, and Washington D.C. As an important aspect of communications skill is listening to others, students are able to actually listen to the Founding Fathers.

Using Technology

Using virtual reality to access information about the Constitution is the world's most advanced method of understanding the past and gathering data, experiencing events they could otherwise never be a part of. What truly sets the Virtual Constitution apart as a technology tool is the ability to put students inside of historical places and events to engage their attention.

Working on Teams

The Virtual Constitution very effectively sets the stage for spirited group discussions after using the program. By giving each student an opportunity to experience life in the U.S. in 1787 and the Constitutional Convention, students are encouraged to listen carefully to the view of each group member, and represent their own points of views appropriately and effectively. This is possible because of virtual reality, "they were there."

Making Connections

Because social science is a highly integrated set of disciplines mixing economics, geography, history, and other disciplines, students must grasp the connections between them. The Virtual Constitution brings all of these facets together in an easy to understand visual and experiential context. Furthermore, through virtual reality, all of these components make immediate sense to students because they actually experienced them.