

Repentino. Magazine Presents:

Flying High in Education: Google Expeditions Pioneer Program



Ever wonder what it's like to visit the Eiffel Tower or the bottom of the ocean? Take a glance at the project in works and admire the mechanics to change education for the better.

Last week the American School Foundation was ground zero for a new innovative virtual education 'machine'.

Tech giant Google came to the ASF campus in México City to test out their new virtual reality equipment, that is made of folded cardboard and an ordinary android cell phone. This headgear allowed students to view landscapes in a spectrum of 360*, making it appear that indeed they were not just there, but floating many meters above the sky! In order to obtain feedback from actual students in the international educative atmosphere, this device was tested on 500 students, ranging from second to fourth grade classrooms. This workshop took place all day during March 14th, in the Wellness Center.

This 'testing' is done primarily because Google might want to expand and apply this technology around the world, and this process helped collect data on how this innovation would be received abroad. This "expansion" is very plausible, since this technology only requires a router, an android phone, the cardboard shell and a power outlet.



Effects on School

One of the main aspects that Google Expeditions is hoping to achieve is to revolutionize the educational system. More often than not, many students are bored or lost in a subject that requires visual interpretation and understanding. With schools filled with generations of students who thrive on image-based learning, this technology would help the student not only visualize the place he or she is studying, but also understand the subject, like art history, even better.

Another aspect that cannot be ignored is the dynamics that turn the class period into a trip around the world, without ever leaving their seats. It allows classes to be more dynamic; students can actually see a location for themselves where a special event might have happened. While the technology has the restriction of using the same phones at the same time, provided by only the teacher at that specific moment, history flashes before your eyes - the place, the time, and its specific characteristics -only heightens the overall effect on both the student and the system.

Reactions of Children

What would be your reaction if you were suddenly suspended high up in the air, in let's say, the Pyramids of Giza? Two second grade students that experienced this were amazed. Both students (a boy and a girl) thought that this was amazing. Although they were a bit dazed by the sudden altitude of their surroundings, they both found this pretty astounding. When asked whether they would approve of this in their classroom both students agreed that this would be a great benefit for their learning. Plus they said "It was really cool!"

Art and Literature Expanded

Through the cardboard box, students can become more intune with the visual imagery they are presented. As they see places impossible to reach in the moment, the breath-taking scenery captivates watchers to better understand the beauty that comes with the area. Take the room of Louis XIV: its golden-lined walls, its jeweled decorations around the spouses' bed, and the overall exquisitely foreign taste of the room brings more to the imagination of the student. The mere art of the king's room and the specific detail and decoration, allows the student to feel awe and better understand the history that came with it.

Shakespeare's or Hemingway's birth places show more than just domestication; they show inspiration for literature, hardships, as well as achievements literary giants have set up in their childhood houses. Visit the museum of Monet through the glass and have your breath taken away by the beauty of his works, but don't forget to also visit the parks where he resided at to get the inspiration to draw them.

Its Importance

The expedition, by showing students certain places that you can't find through images alone, become more than just a teacher-student relationship; it reforms the whole classroom. As future generations thriving to improve education for the masses, ASF has a head start in starting this kind of change. It's important to see how exactly Google Expeditions is pushing the change in school systems for the better. This kind of technology will allow not only experience, but a burst in diversity and international relationships. Knowledge is available for everyone, for not only a blast in the past and a warning of global warming, but also for an expulsion of myths and stereotypes.

Google Expeditions gives more to the mind as its ingenuity, innovativeness, and practicality inspires students to stay attentive and interested as well as motivated.

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