

Versatile VR

A stylized illustration of a satellite in space. The satellite is teal and has two large solar panel arrays extending from its central body. Two small astronauts in teal suits are floating in the dark blue space around the satellite. The background is filled with small white stars and a few larger, faint celestial bodies.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Define what teamwork is, and explain how empathy and communication impact how a team works together.
2. Connect emotions identified in VR to emotions experienced in their own lives.

Materials

For this activity, each student will need an Oculus Rift headset and pen/paper.

Exercises

[3 min] Introduction

Begin with a quick introduction to the idea of empathy. Before transitioning to the virtual reality experience, preview that you are going to be examining how empathy, teamwork, and communication can manifest in stressful situations.

[5-7 min] Kaleidoscope VR Experience

Begin by explaining virtual reality. Explain to the student that “VR” describes an artificial three-dimensional environment created with computer graphics and simulation technologies. Give the students their headsets, and ask them to keep in mind the concepts of empathy and teamwork previously discussed as they navigate through the experience. Give them the following premise for the experience:

You are on a mission to Mars when something goes wrong. Try to find your fellow astronauts while you wait for help to arrive, and be sure to listen to your communication device in order to learn more about the situation.

Exercises

[8 min] Reflection

Give students pen/paper and up to 8 minutes to reflect quietly on the VR experience. Provide prompts to encourage students to think about the emotions of the astronauts and to connect these emotions to their own lives. Suggested reflection prompts include:

- › What does teamwork mean to you? What do you think are good traits for a team?
- › Did you feel like the team of astronauts worked well together - why or why not?
- › Think of a time when you were working in a group and there was a disagreement. How did you and your group members tackle the disagreement? What strategies did you find most useful?
- › Why did Applegate lie to Rivera about sabotaging his lunar space expedition? What was Rivera's reaction?
- › Have you seen students try to make others feel bad? What makes them do that?
- › Think of a time when you hurt someone's feelings. Describe what happened. How did you know you hurt the person's feelings? How did you feel about it? What did you do to make the situation better?

[12 min] Pair Share/Share Out

Have students share their reflection responses with their partners or a small group. Encourage sharing by ensuring that students will not be required to share with everyone. Spend 4-5 minutes in small group or pair sharing, and then open up the floor to sharing with the whole group for 5-7 minutes.

Success Criteria/Formative Assessment

Students should demonstrate an understanding of empathy and teamwork in their own life by doing one or more of the following in their reflections:

- › Clearly identifying a personal incident that induced empathy and why
- › Clearly explaining which characteristics help or hurt a team
- › Comparing the astronauts to themselves or others
- › Recognizing and effectively communicating their emotions to others



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in collaboration with

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