Pro/Con Discussion summary by: Sean Dupuis, Dwayne Schnell, Derek McKinnon   June 6, 2013

Pros	Cons
- visit and learn from other cultures - learn new cultural skills - communicate and problem solve with other around the globe - collaboration - flexible learning (ie. from different locales) - active experience - immediate engagement - exploration and hands on for some cases which otherwise are dangerous or impossible - suited to more learning styles - change or adapt sizes of objects within environment (atoms/planets) - work with abstract multi-dimensional concepts - ability to change view/perspective - student excitement - encourages students to be creative - provides students with skills needed for digital world - when visualization, manipulation, and interaction with information are critical for understanding; it is, in fact, its capacity for allowing learners to display and interact with information and environment that some believe is VR's greatest advantage - more personal than email or IM - social leveler (to a degree) - draws people together based on interest, rather than location - explore, predict, and experiment in safety - break down language barriers through translation services - pace of learning flexibility - creativity amplified - quiet reserved students more likely to take risks	- deception/fake student - fake environment, missing realism - no face-to-face interaction - missing opportunities for many of the 'hidden curriculum' topics - time constraints for setup, training - capital cost - motion sickness in cave/goggle setups - IT issues - user embellishments - lower accountability - student isolation - no real-world interaction experience - VR still under development/evolution - escapism - people living more in the virtual world as a way out of the real world. - no real consequences - technology not usable by all - limited by internet access, adequate hardware, money - good eyesight required - segregation of 'the haves' vs. 'the have-nots' - dangers of deception amplified - the blending of virtual and real world in some cases - steep learning curve - students can hide behind the virtual profile get away with things they normally wouldn't do - parental engagement will be limited in some cases

The above list of pros/cons is a consolidation from all of our lists, found throughout the internet.

Our discussion for the pros was mostly about the ability to explore and interact with otherwise impossible situations, like exploring the body or the solar system. This type of exploration could also be expanded into the ability to set up experiments where we can explore, make predictions, and see results over and over again, without added cost or danger.

Another big point was about accessibility, and how an online VR environment can allow for students to come together from around the world, in different situations like patients in a hospital, or even across different languages with translation services. This accessibility can also be related to engagement, the level of interactivity, and intrinsic motivation.

One of the points I brought up was that a text-based communication service like instant messaging or chat within the VR helps reserved students to take more risks, and type things that normally wouldn't be said out loud.

Most of the con-related discussion was around time and cost. The cost could be related to school budgets, or even income levels of families if asking to do some VR work from home, where not all families might have the ability to have adequate hardware/software or internet access.

As teachers, we're already filtering through the curriculum to prioritize "more important" outcomes as a continuing race against the clock to teach students adequately. Throw in a VR environment which now requires student training, maintenance, and troubleshooting; and the time factor weighs very heavily on an already stressed system.

We (mostly I) digressed on this point of time, curriculum, and how I believe the curriculum is too detailed and rigid; that standardization of every graduate is not as important as we think it is, and that teachers should have more freedom to teach students topics based on current events, passion, etc. I realize there are many issues and considerations with this... but it was where we went for a few minutes.

We discussed the possibility of deception and embellishment, where it is so easy to create fake personas in order to be perceived better in the VR environment. This leads to the idea of escapism - where some individuals who want to dissociate with the real world can now enter the virtual world and appear to thrive.

In the end - we decided that VR needs to be a well thought out decision, which requires planning and collaboration from many of the students, teachers and admin involved. There are roughly an equal number of pros/cons, and there are many different types of VR systems that could be deployed based on the needs of the school/teacher.