

Future Voices: CoSpaces Lesson Plan

Introduce Ourselves (5 minutes)

Hi! We're Monique, Meric, Leah and Hannah and we're graduate students in design at Carnegie Mellon University. We're here today as guest makers to do a fun virtual reality activity with you. We've been working together all year on a project to figure out how we can use technology to help students imagine the future of their communities and bring them to life. Today we're experimenting with virtual reality and we hope you'll help us!

Before we get started, does anyone have any questions for us?

Introduce Utopia vs. Dystopia (10 minutes)

So, outside of your imaginations, where have you seen people imagine the future before?

- Books
- Comics
- TV Shows
- Movies

We're going to start today's session by watching two short movie clips. You may have seen these movies before, but we're going to watch them again because they will help us have a conversation about the different ways people imagine the future and why they might do it.

- We're going to watch both of the clips and then have a conversation about both of them together. Does that sound okay?

Watch video clips (5 minutes)

- Wall-E: Clip 1 (0:30 - 1:35): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vx-4Hz_W-TY
- Wall-E: Clip 2 (Full clip - 1:18): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHH3iSeDBLo>
- Zootopia: Clip 1 (0:00 - 2:15): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNCDpTd_j3Y
- Zootopia: Clip 2 (Full clip - 2:43): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McJHE4mPrNs>

Alright, so what did you think? Have you seen these movies before? Have you ever thought about them as visions of the future? How are these two visions of the future different?

There's actually a name for this type of imagined future.

- When someone imagines a future that is all positive and happy, it's called a Utopia. Has anyone heard that word before? Where?
- When someone imagines a future that is all negative and sad, it's called a Dystopia
- Why might someone want to imagine the future in these ways?
 - Inspiration

- Fear
- Motivation
- What else?

Introduce Activity (10 minutes)

So, now that we've looked at different ways someone might imagine the future, you're going to get to do it yourself.

- Today, you're going to get to imagine, build and experience your own imagined future of the Assemble block
- You'll get to choose a future from these cards to get your imagination working.
- You can imagine a Utopia or a Dystopia, but we want you to think about why you might imagine one or the other.
- We're going to use a software called Co Spaces to build your future block and then you're going to get to experience them in virtual reality.
- Now, Meric is going to show you how Co Spaces work before you get your own computers and start working.

Now, we're going to break up into smaller groups and get working! Does anyone have any questions before we do?

Build the Future of the Assemble Block (30 minutes)

We walk around to help as needed but remain largely unobtrusive as students build their own spaces.

Experience your Assemble Block (15 minutes)

Now that you've built these great imagined futures, you're going to get to experience them in virtual reality.

- Has anyone used virtual reality before?
- We're going to use mobile phones and a VR headset to experience your futures. The phone and the headset work together to merge these two images together to give you the feeling that you're walking around in a virtual space.

We walk around and help as needed but remain largely unobtrusive as students experience their virtual worlds.

How does it feel to walk around in your imagined future?

Did you notice anything that you hadn't thought of when you were building your space?

Is there anything you would have done differently now that you've experienced it on the ground?

Experience an Alternate Block (15 minutes)

Now, we want you to exchange futures with another group to experience the future they've imagined.

- What is it like to walk around in a world someone else has designed?
- How does that make you feel?
- Do you have any advice for the group that made this new future?
- How would you go about working together to make a future that you both enjoy?

Debrief / Conversation (15 minutes)

How did that feel? Did you all like creating and experience your futures as well as the futures other people have designed?

What you've just done is a really important thing. There are professionals who do this everyday for a job

- Urban planners
- Civil Engineers
- Community Developers

These are people that have to consider all sorts of things when they design spaces. What they are really doing, is imagining the future for themselves and for other people.

- What was it like to experience a space that someone else had designed without asking you about it first?
- What was it like to design a space for yourself and others without asking them about it?
 - Did you think about other people when you were designing your space?
 - Are you thinking about other people now?
 - How might you have done this activity differently if we asked you to imagine the future of Assemble's block for other people (not you)?

We hope you enjoyed this activity, and we hope it has gotten you thinking about all the ways you can imagine, and help build the future of your community.

Example Prompts:

- Kids ruled the world?
- Aliens invaded Earth?
- Humans colonized Mars?
- Penn Ave were like Hogwarts?
- We grew our own food?

- Girls ruled the world?
- Animals could talk?
- Everyone was an artist?
- There were more green spaces (parks, gardens etc.)?
- If robots lived among us?
- If you had all the money in the world?
- If there were no cars?
- If it snowed everyday?
- If it flooded all the time?
- If it was designed for your grandparents?
- If people were awake at night and slept during the day?
- If everyone spoke the same language?
- If there were no police officers?
- If there was no crime?
- If we could travel through time?
- If everyone wore virtual reality headsets?
- If there were no trees?
- If the sun disappeared?
- If Pittsburgh's rivers were dry?
- If robots did all of our work?