Embodied Storytelling and Empathic Possession with Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence

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Hype?

https://www.partyscene.nl/algemeen/168319/dieter-doepfer-maakt-nintendo-power-glove-voor-kraftwerk
Can walking in the shoes or seeing the world through the eyes of another person in VR through virtual embodiment be used to help young adult learners feel empathy?
Virtual Reality
Defining the modality
● Computer-generated simulation
● 3D images and environments
● Experienced in a “seemingly real or physical way”
● With interface devices such as helmet/gloves
● Walking in someone else’s shoes
● Ability to perceive the meaning and feelings of another and to communicate those feelings to the other person (Brunero et al., 2010, p. 65)
“Virtual reality is the 'ultimate empathy machine.' These experiences are more than documentaries. They're opportunities to walk a mile in someone else's shoes.”

~Chris Milk

“VR is unique in creating this sense of presence, like you’re right there with another person or in another place.”

~Mark Zuckerberg


“What if I could present you with a story that you could remember with your whole body and not just with your mind?”

~Nonny de la Peña

https://www.ted.com/talks/nonny_de_la_pena_the_future_of_news_virtual_reality#t-6454

Image Credit: http://www.storybench.org/quick-tour-science-virtual-reality/
Sensorama (1957) invented by Morton Heilig

- Simulations of 3D images
- With smell, wind, and sound
- An immersive 3D theater

● Sega VR home system and arcade version
● 360-degree environmental immersion
● Haptic feedback

Sega VR (1993)

The Proteus Effect
Duality of Presence

- Scarygirl VR immersive, event based experience by Dark Slope VR
- Scarygirl’s quest to improve the environment and save the forest

Image Credit: Dark Slope VR, Retrieved from https://www.darkslopestudios.com/
Trigger Warning

Some examples include intense scenes of domestic abuse and the Holocaust
1. The Machine to Be Another

BeAnotherLab.org
Conclusion?
2. Out of Exile: Daniel's Story
Nonny de la Peña
Conclusion?
3. The Last Goodbye

USC Shoah Foundation
In October 1941, the Germans established Majdanek, a death camp outside of Lublin, Poland where some 150,000 inmates of all nationalities were forced to work, tortured, murdered or dispersed to other slave labor factories.
Conclusion?

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Promising studies

**Bullying**
VR participants would engage in helping behaviour toward a physical assault victim if that victim were wearing an opposing team’s soccer jersey
Hortensius et al. (2018)

**Prosocial Helping**
Rosenberg et al. (2013) contrasted a VR experience as a superhero vs. one experienced as a passive tourist in a helicopter

**Perspective Taking**
Study focused on embodied empathy and the experience of red-green colour blindness by Ahn et al. (2016)
Artificial intelligence

Proteus Effect + Dialogue Interactivity
Meet Ivy - Empathy Bot

https://crisfudge.artstation.com/projects/myNGa
THANKS!

Any questions?
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