

EAST Initiative

Responding to the Needs of Modern Education

Dear Scott and Paul,

Thank you for introducing the Virtual Reality Development Lab (VRDL) to tow of my students and me for tow days in November of 2003. We were completely amazed by what it can do and have nothing but praise for the professionalism and thoroughness in the way you work with all of the EAST students during training.

My position at St. Joe High School is EAST Lab Facilitator. In this position I work with 7th - 12th grade students in a high technology environment. The Students identify problems in the community then employ the technology as needed to solve those problems. The VRDL system will apply to all of the student projects we work on in that it provides a platform for trying together all elements of a project.

For example, one of the student teams is currently working on building a county model for increasing the number of designated landing zones for helicopters deployed on emergency flights. Whether the emergency is small scale or large scale, the database developed by these students will be available to pilots and first responders in book form and digital form to help make emergency evacuations more efficient.

Applying the VRDL technology to this project will be a dream come true. We're imagining

- A 360 degree environment of landing zones (LZ) with hotlinks to the tools that students are using to make sure the site meets the parameters of a high quality LZ. Those links can tie into video clips or voiceovers of students describing the process of LZ designation, pictures and text showing and describing the tools being used, websites that tell more about LZ's, and maps of all of the LZ's in the county.
- A 360 degree environment of a helicopter with links to voiceovers by the pilot about evacuation protocol, text documents describing the type of helicopters used, and video clips of landing at an LZ.
- A 360 degree environment of the EAST classroom showing students working on all aspects of the project.

With VRDL we will easily be able to share a comprehensive program about this or any other project with anyone who is interested in what St. Joe EAST is doing.

Also, I see this technology being used by nearly all students who are interested. Even though it appears to be highly sophisticated hardware and software due to the polished and realistic product experienced, the basics of the technology are not difficult to master. For students who want deeper understanding and less traditional approaches to the technology, plenty of opportunity exists to make adjustments in the process and experiment.

Once again, thank you so much for providing both the VRDL, technology and the superb training to Arkansas EAST students. The high school experience of students who learn the capabilities of this hardware and software will be significantly.

Sincerely,
Ruth Andre
St. Joe EAST