

# Guest Blog: Breaking Down the Walls of the Classroom with Virtual Reality

Feb 8, 2022 | 5 min read



In [West Baton Rouge \(WBR\) Parish Schools](#) in Port Allen, Louisiana, we are breaking down the walls of our classrooms and using [ClassVR](#) to help our students explore locations around the world and even outside of this world. The experiences provided with ClassVR have allowed our students to make connections to books they are reading and topics that they are studying.

In WBR, we approach ClassVR with a little twist. All of our ClassVR kits are housed in our Technology Department and checked out to individual teachers. We manage a district checkout system for a variety of educational technology peripherals and tools. ClassVR has become a hot “checkout” option!

## Our ClassVR Journey

Our journey into ClassVR began during the Spring of 2021. WBR has utilized virtual field trips for years within our district checkout system. When we discovered that the devices we were using would be retiring within a year, we knew that we needed to start researching another solution for our smart classrooms. This is when we discovered the world of ClassVR.

We chose ClassVR over other solutions for a couple of reasons. They were highly recommended by a trusted colleague outside of our district. [AXI Solutions](#), one of our most reliable partners in WBR also were very excited about how ClassVR was changing the way their clients were accessing VR experiences. Once we actually got our hands on a ClassVR unit, it was an easy decision. There was a variety of well-done and extremely effective [experiences that were already available for our use](#). In addition, we felt that these were devices that we could grow with as a district.

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# Step 1: Obtaining Devices

The first thing that we needed was to explore the devices, learn the devices, and introduce them to our teachers. We also knew that we needed to make this change in the middle of a COVID-19 school year. This posed a huge issue in terms of professional development.

# Step 2: Introducing to our Teachers

Once we obtained our devices, we began to introduce the new devices to several of our teachers throughout the district that have embraced more innovative teaching tools. Once we did this, the devices started to gain traction. This interest allowed us to begin visiting individual school Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to introduce ClassVR. This gave teachers more time to explore the many resources available through the [ClassVR portal](#).



# Step 3: Connecting to our Summer Professional Development Challenge

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We connected ClassVR into our summer professional development opportunity and technology challenge. Teachers received points (that turned into money) to complete small challenges. We included an introduction to ClassVR as a Mini Challenge.

Sample: [Summer ClassVR Challenge](#)

## Step 4: Setting up the District Checkout System

As of January 2022, we have 128 ClassVR Headsets. We have 16 kits of 8 devices. We have labeled each device with their given names in ClassVR, example; Faithful Alpaca. When a teacher checks out a kit for the first time, we send them an invitation to join our district license in the portal. We also send out video instructions on how to search and create playlists in case the teacher needs to review it. If multiple teachers check out the devices at the same time, the teachers use the grouping capabilities of the portal. Adding the name of the drive to the headset makes it easier for the teachers to know their groups.

We use our in-house mail system for delivery and pickup of the kits to the schools. When devices are returned to the Technology Department, we utilize our student workers to clean and prepare them for their next journey into the classroom.

What we are most excited about with these devices is that they are constantly checked out to teachers around the district. Their popularity has grown tremendously since we purchased our first kit. They are utilized from early childhood to high school. In the Technology Department, we see how these devices are providing our teachers with an avenue to break down the walls of their classrooms and provide students with experiences firsthand. They truly feel that they are walking along the Great Wall of China, that they are swimming with sharks, or even exploring the Roman Colosseum.

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ClassVR provides us with more opportunities for augmented and virtual reality by allowing us to experience scenes outside of the ClassVR Portal. ClassVR offers a community library. Teachers from around the world are able to share their virtual and augmented experiences in the community library. We have even more access to remote areas of the world that we would never before be able to see. Plus, with ClassVR, we even have access to experience all of the YouTube 360 videos. Between the Community library, the ClassVR library, and access to the YouTube library, there is no limit to the experiences that we can offer our students.

Our Kindergarten students had the opportunity to ride along with Santa on his sleigh as he delivered presents all over the world. Since there were no Santa Claus experiences in the ClassVR library, we were able to utilize YouTube 360 Videos. The Youtube videos could be downloaded into the library and shared through the ClassVR cloud for all of the teachers to have immediate access.

We also have a group of third grade teachers that regularly use ClassVR as a part of their reading curriculum. The teachers have the students complete a Notice and Wonder Chart. The concept is: What are the things you notice about "Topic" and what are the things you wonder about "Topic?" ClassVR is perfect for this activity. They recently used ClassVR when noticing and wondering about sharks. Here is the [example of the chart](#) they used. This is a great steppingstone for a reading class.

We are looking forward to many more experiences with ClassVR as we continue to explore the possibilities and to break down the walls of our classrooms.

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