

— NewsDay VR

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Immersive Journalism Education for Real-world Preparedness and Wellbeing



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Carl Hartley intro

- Works as a lecturer as well as in industry for the BBC and others, mainly on radio
- Building up student skills from traditional Newsday events where students run newsrooms
- Not many trauma stories to work with, so scenario-based learning was researched
- Working on a project idea from the University of Sheffield
- Safe environment for practicing journalism skills
- Scoping: scaled back storyline, created a drugs raid story in VR
- Colleagues played witnesses and police in the videos
- Next iteration brings in trauma and wellbeing as a focus
- Actors paid through successful funding



NewsDayVR Overview

01 Iteration

Completed November 2024

Continue to be used in the existing curriculum

No budget

02 Iteration

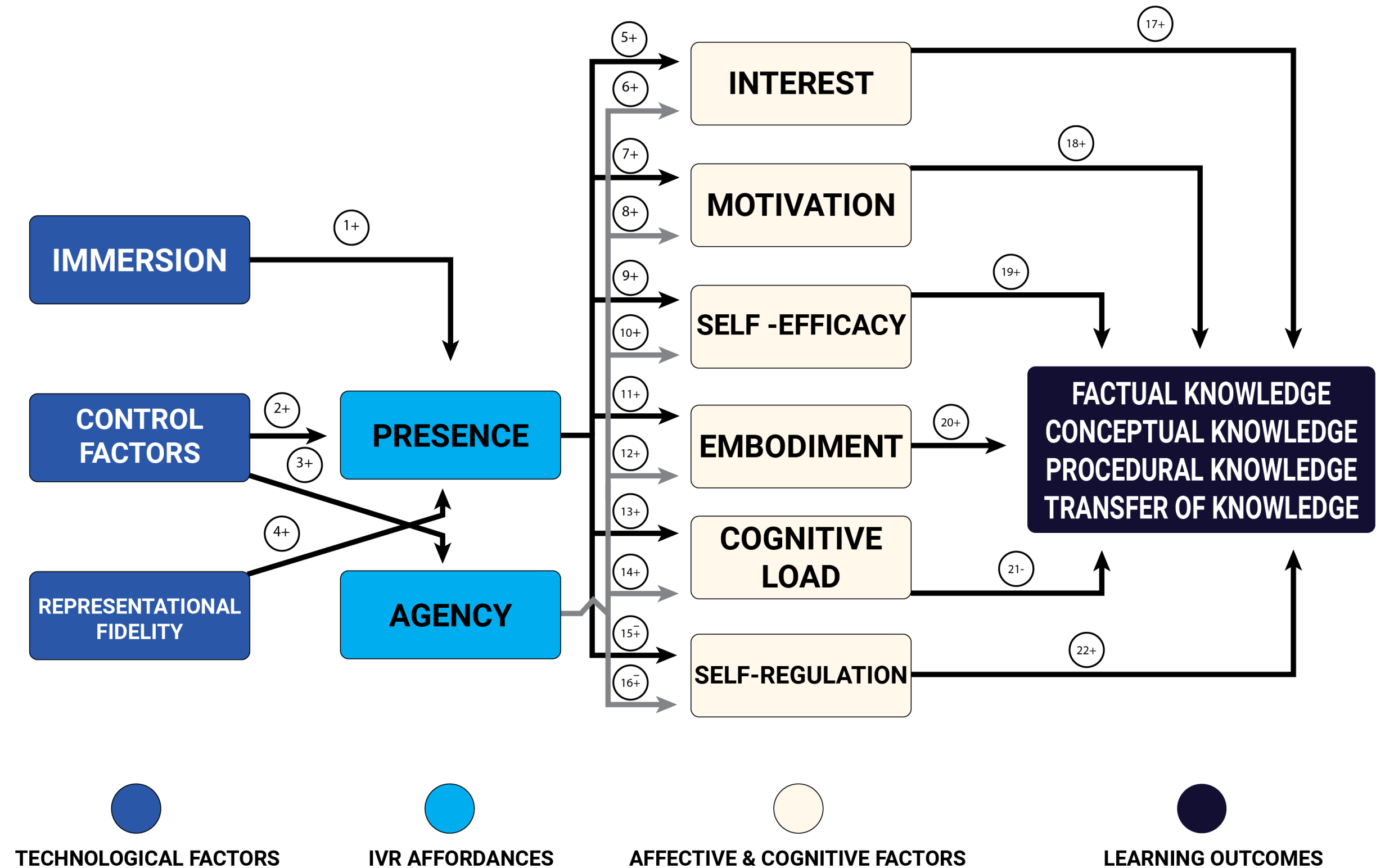
In production

Improve upon iteration 01

Funded



The Cognitive Affective Model for Immersive Learning



Makransky and Peterson (2021)

Affordances of VR

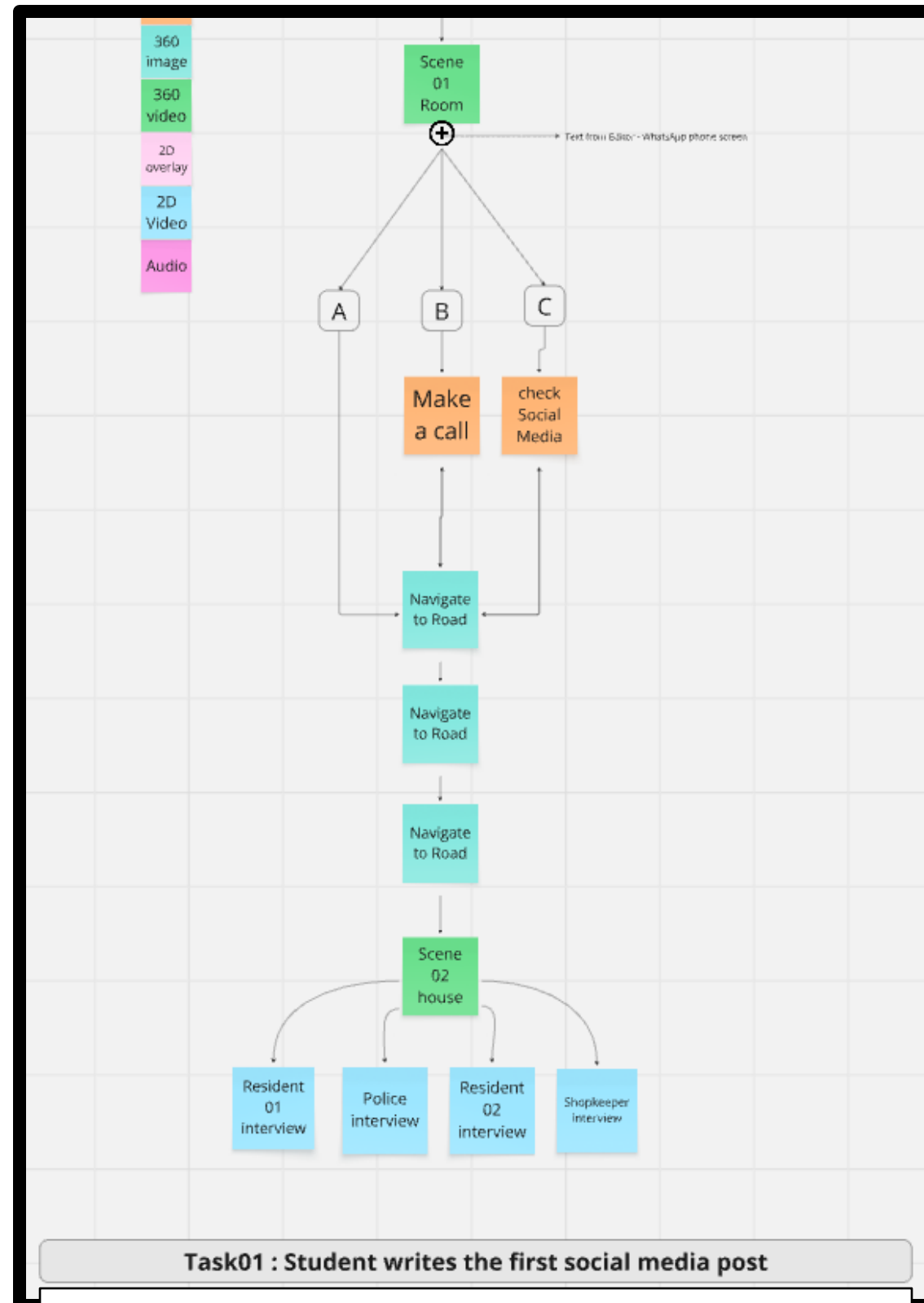


Image: Plotting the Learning Resource in Miro

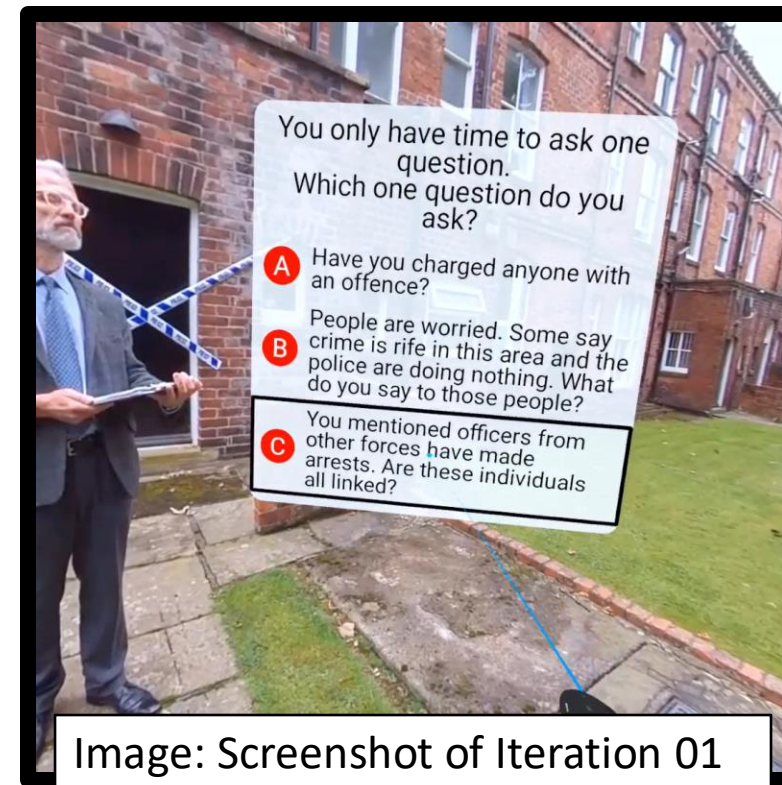


Image: Screenshot of Iteration 01

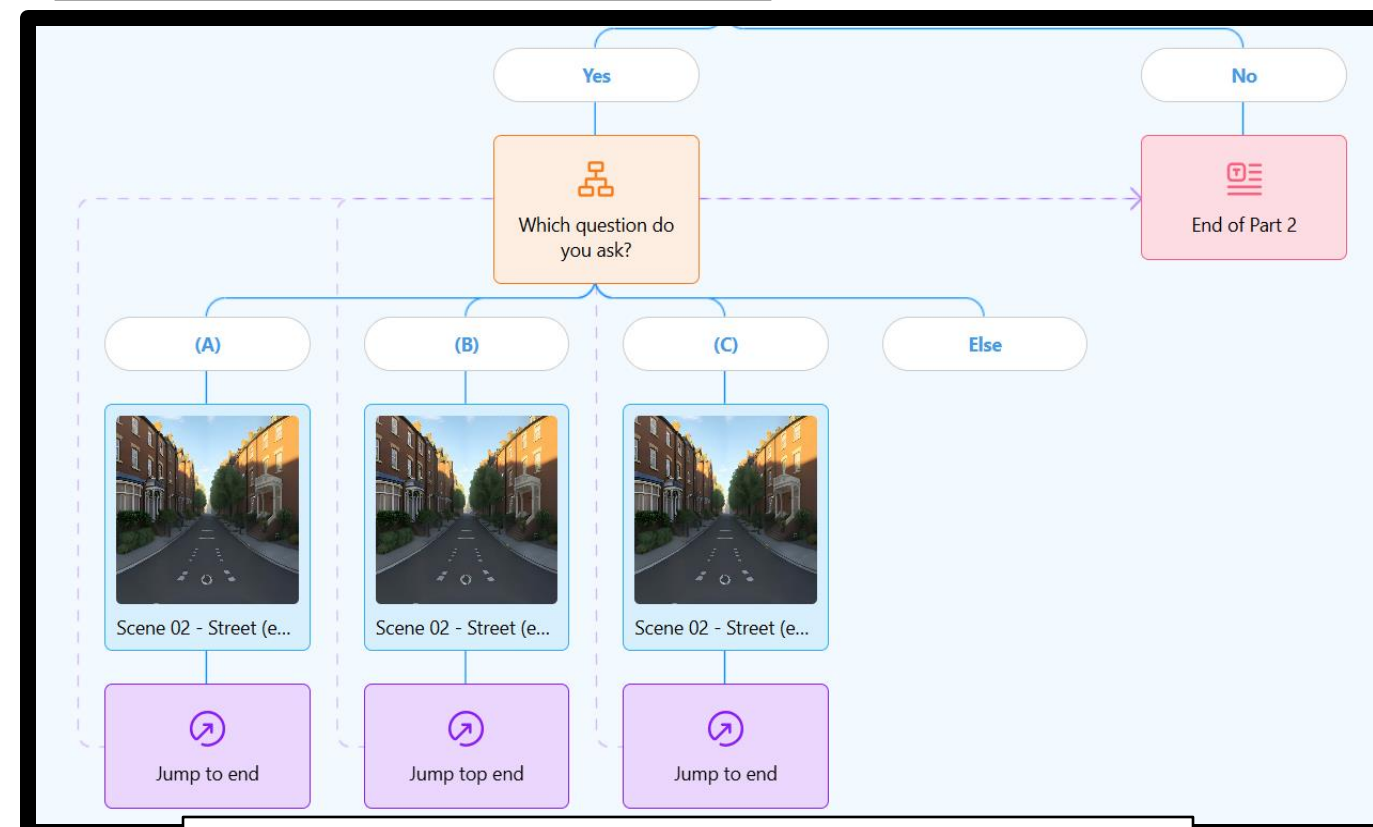


Image: adding placeholder 360 video in ThingLink

Agency

- More choice for the feeling of control
- Not the same outcome for every learner

Presence

- Immersive experience
- Realistic assets



Affordances of VR

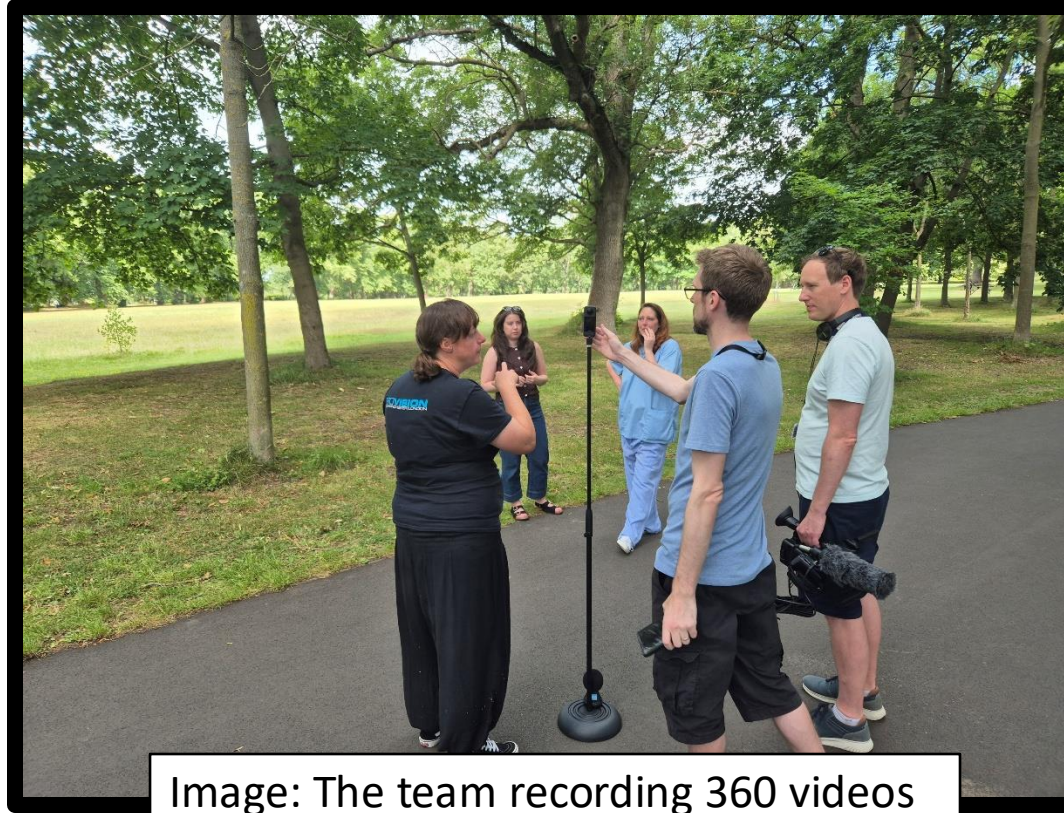


Image: The team recording 360 videos

Agency

- More Choice for the feeling of control
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Presence

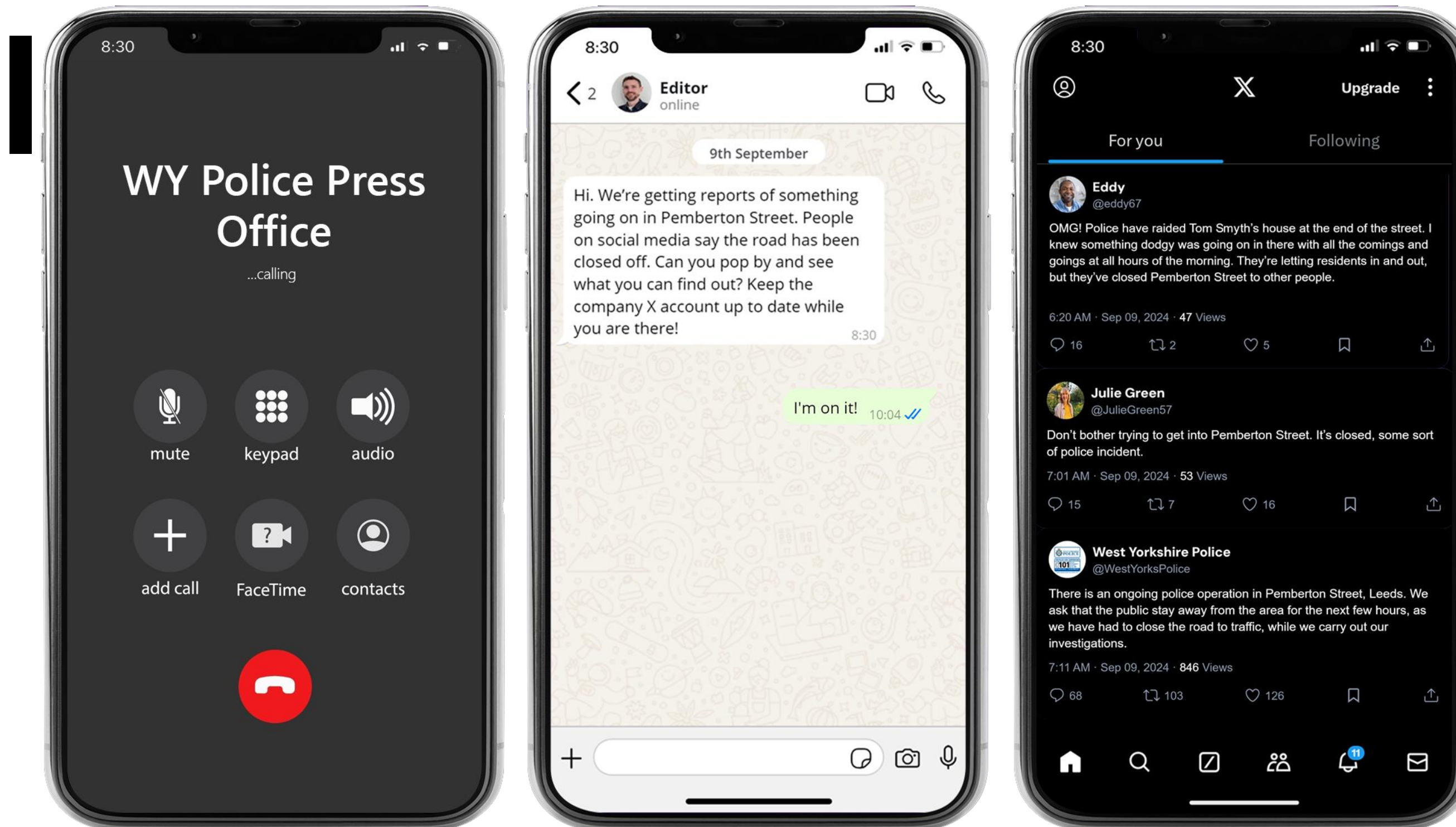
- Immersive experience
- Realistic assets



Image: Example of the 360-video immersion in the learning resource



Affordances of VR



Images: iPhone call, WhatsApp and X screenshots – created using online generators to simulate real world investigation

Agency

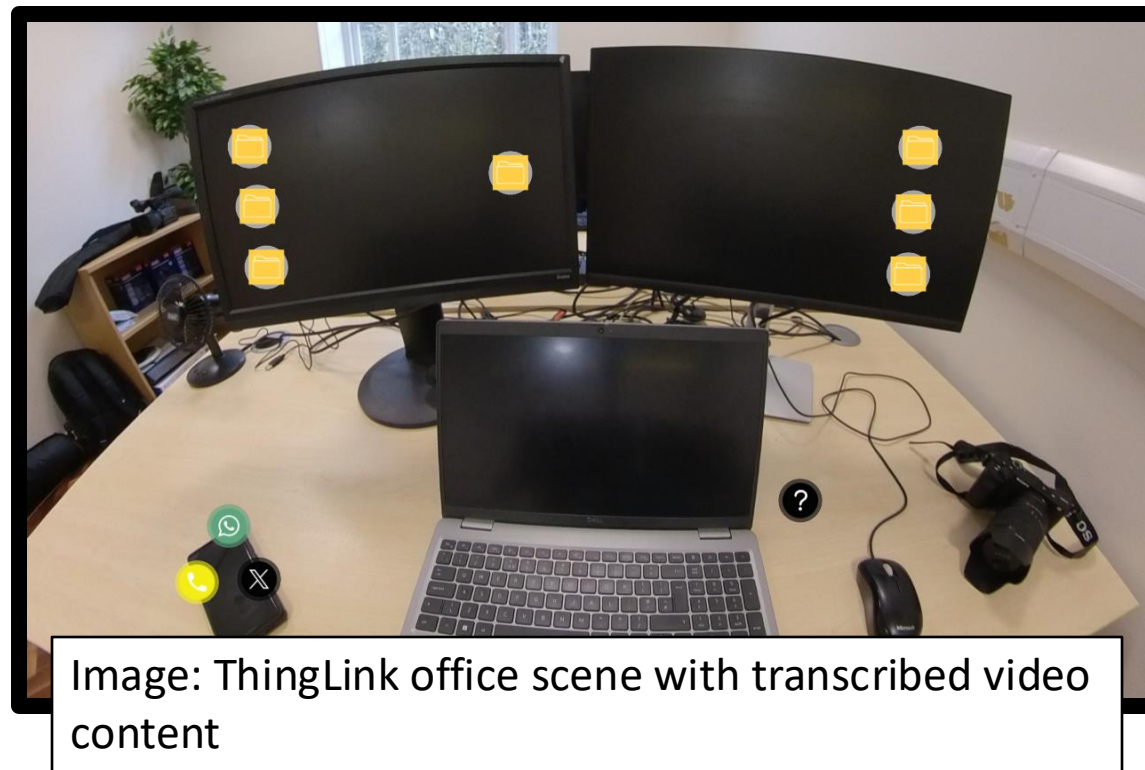
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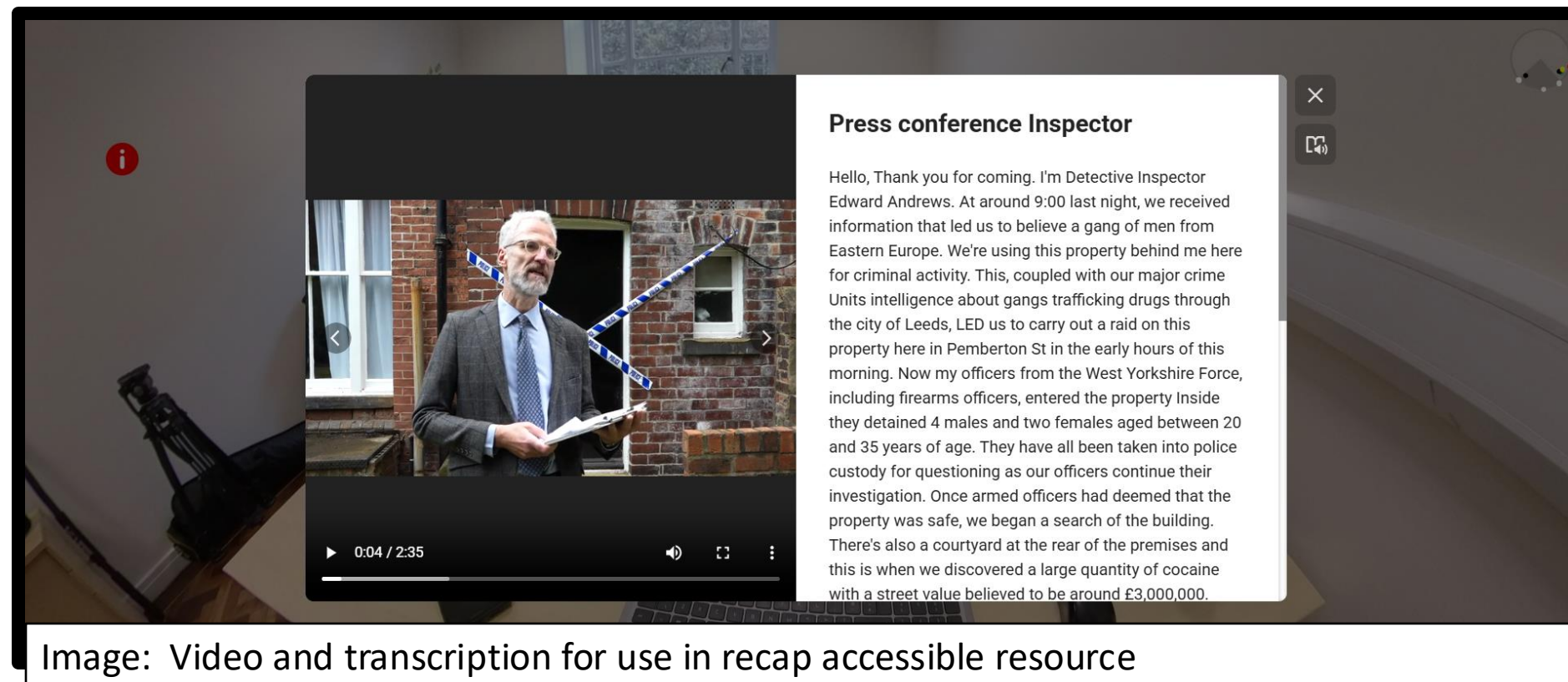


Accessibility



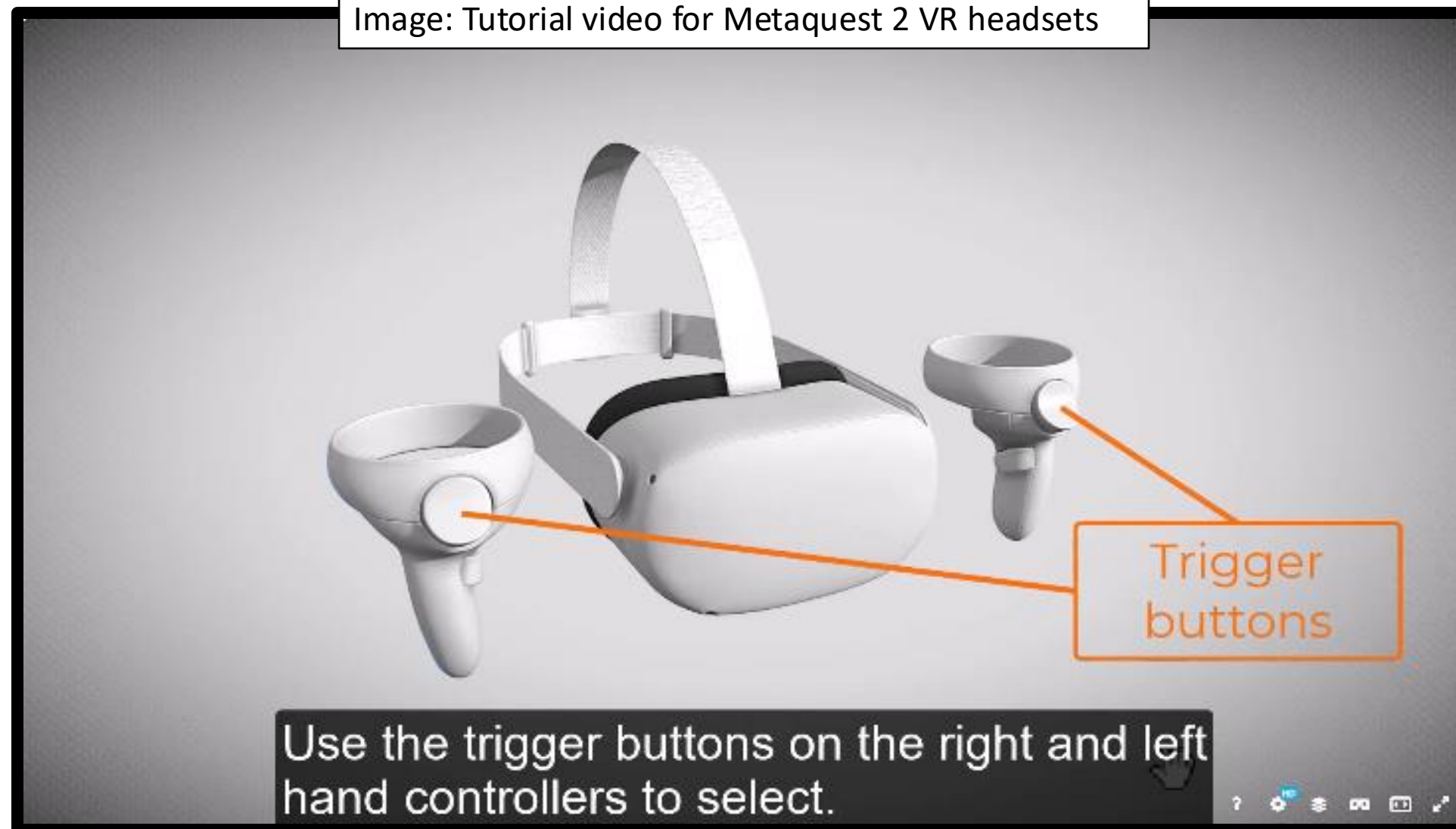
ThingLink

- Resources and multimedia made accessible available after the VR experience, can be used for recap
- Variety of customisable accessible formats for user autonomy



Inclusivity

Image: Tutorial video for Metaquest 2 VR headsets



Pre-workshop

- Flipped learning approach to reduce user issues with new technology
- VR instructional video provided a week in advance to students to provide awareness
- Online 3D models and AI narration used for quick turnaround



Inclusivity

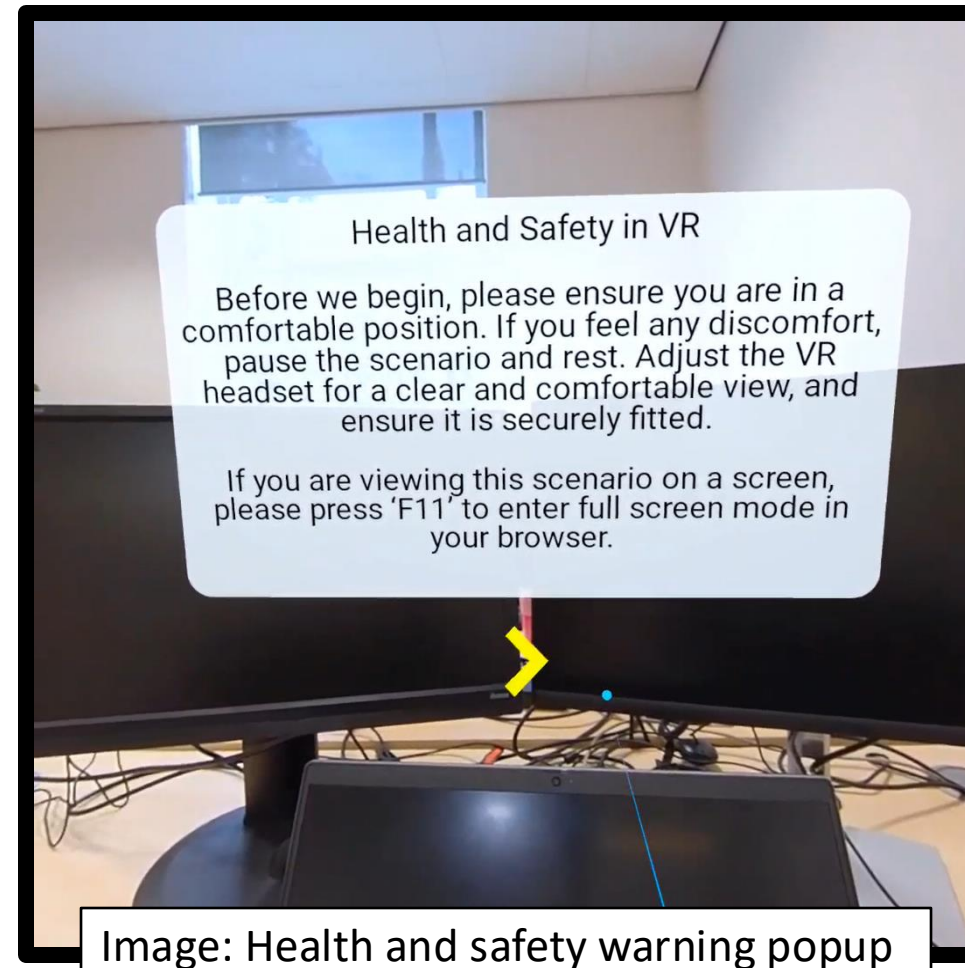


Image: Health and safety warning popup

Pre-VR Resource

- Hotspot key – to reduce cognitive load and provide information on how to interact within the resource
- Health and Safety warning to make students comfortable within the experience

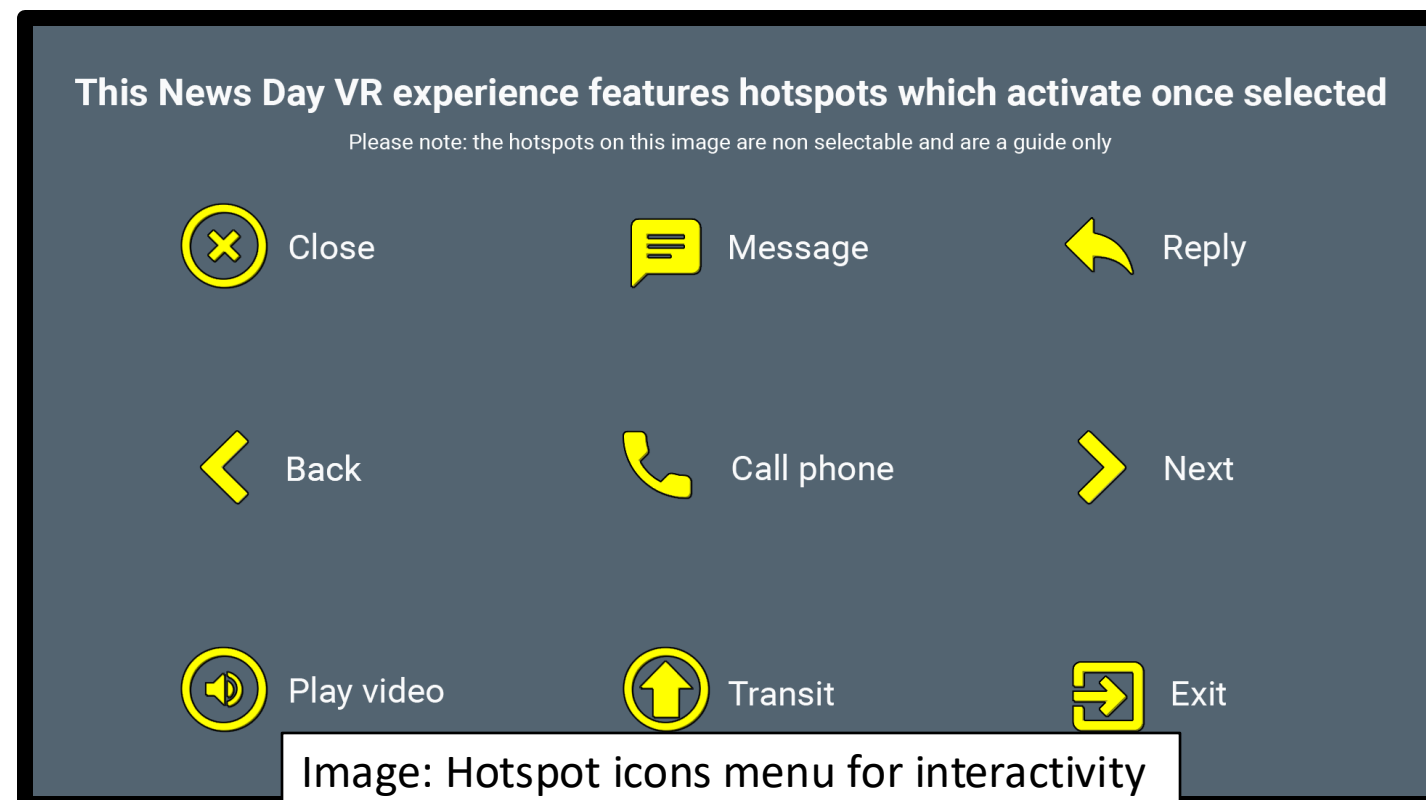


Image: Hotspot icons menu for interactivity

Capture and User Testing

Capture content



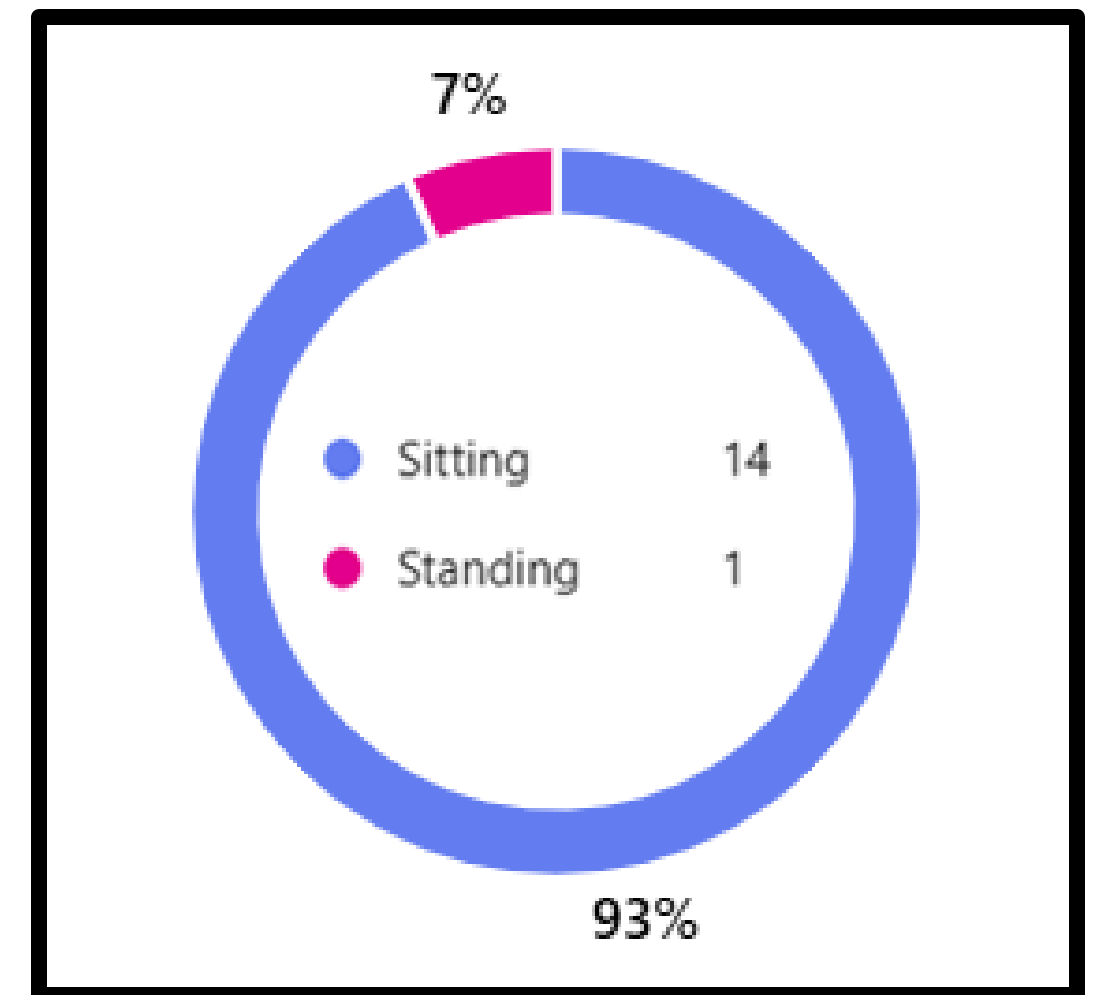
- Secure locations
- Recruit actors
- Edit 360° and 2D videos

Recruit stakeholders to test



- Recruit stakeholders
- Demo resource
- Test on headsets and device

Work with user feedback



- Collect feedback
- Analysis
- Amend resource



Delivery of iteration 01

Group 01 in VR Workshop



- Class sessions x 3
- Prior demo
- Group discussions

Group 02 in VR space



- Experience split into two parts
- Evaluation collected
- Time to reset equipment

Group 03 in VR classroom

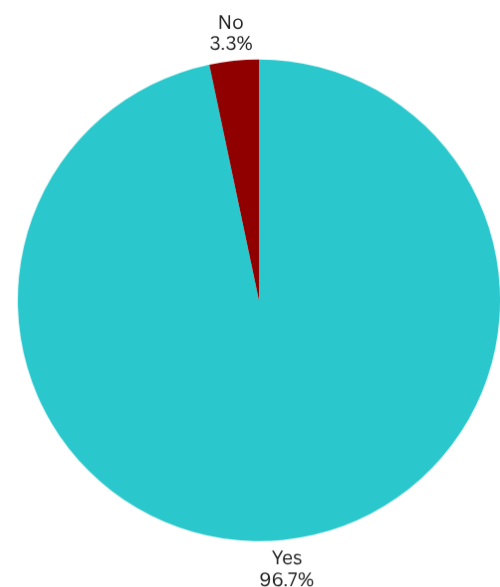
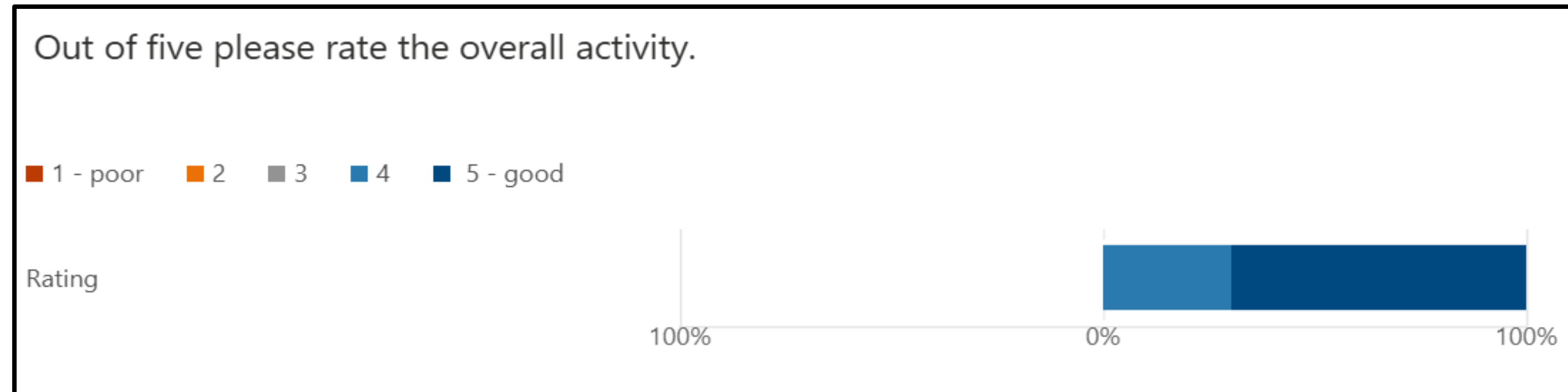


- Ongoing reflection
- Formative assessment
- Industry-aligned tasks



Delivery of iteration 01

Student Feedback



96.7% of students requested further VR experiences

Student Feedback

List three things you have learnt from today's session

“How to use VR, always ask follow up questions, make sure you pay attention to every detail”



Student Feedback

How will you apply what you have learnt in your future studies / work?

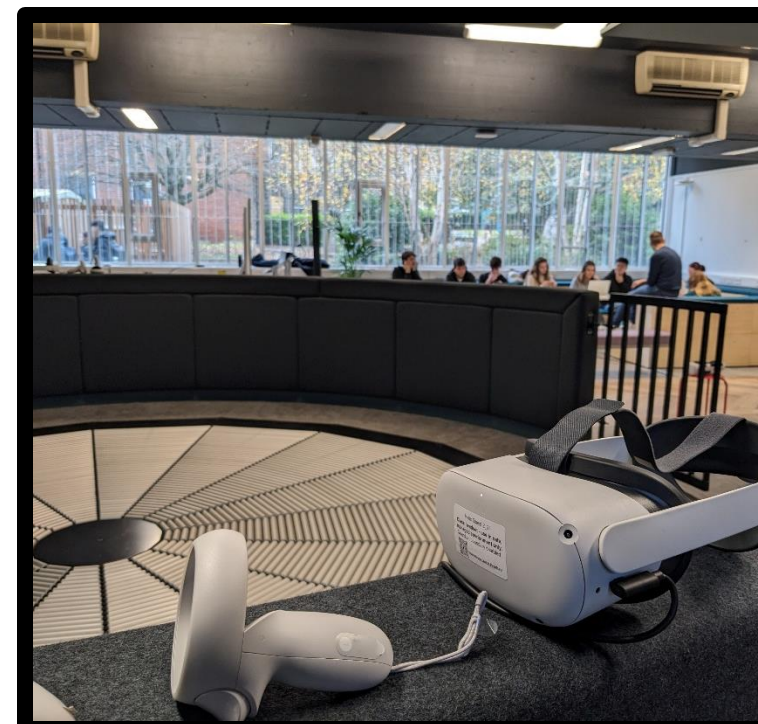
“I will be able to take on more information and I will be able to apply how to take key facts and verify facts from witnesses and always ask follow up questions”



Student Feedback

How did you feel before, during and after the activity?

**“Before I was slightly nervous.
During I was very engaged.
After I felt it was fun and would do it again”**



Awards and recognition

Iteration 01 won the
University of Leeds
Arts, Humanities and Cultures
Partnership Award for Innovation
in 2025



In January 2025 the resource
was part of a report on
Journalism.co.uk:
**UK university uses VR to train
students in crime reporting**

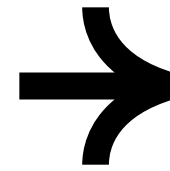


NewsDay VR Iteration 01

- No budget
- Staff as actors
- 2D video plays in VR



Image: 2D pop-ups in VR



Heighten Immersion

NewsDay VR Iteration 02

- £1000 budget
- Hired local actors
- Full 360° video throughout



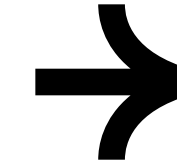
Image: 360 video for character interactions, minimising immersion breaks for learners



NewsDay VR Iteration 01



Journalistic techniques

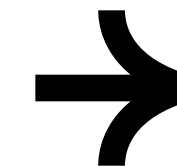


NewsDay VR Iteration 02

Journalistic techniques & wellbeing of the journalist



Drug Crime themed breaking news story



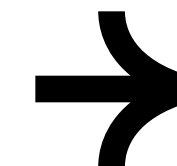
Traumatic incident themed breaking news story

Reflection

Deeper Reflection and student check-ins



2x multi-choice actions



Choices will change outcome of experience



Thank You for Listening. Any Questions?



Try the resource:

← NewsdayVR
experience

Accessible
recap version →



Further Information?

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