Dear reader,

The idea for this issue on Virtual Reality and Education sprung from a conversation I had with Marie Graham who teaches VR at the Mount Vernon Presbyterian School in Atlanta, Georgia. We thank Ms. Graham for taking the lead in producing this issue and are grateful to her brilliant students for serving as editors and interviewers. We thank her devoted colleagues for embracing the idea and Ms. Rikki Hagerty for designing this issue.

It is the notion that your sense of 'presence' is highest in VR than in any screen media like YouTube, movies or television that makes VR the future of education and intervention. While the prospects for VR, Augmented Reality or Mixed Reality are manifold as you will discover in this magazine, we also need to be careful that these new technologies are used sparingly so as not to misshape the brain and are not misused for brainwashing or indoctrination. Bearing this in mind, you can evaluate how you can best utilize VR to enhance your creative potential and freedom of expression.

Happy reading,

Ashfaq Ishaq Ph. D.
Chairman
INTRODUCTION

BASICS OF VR/AR

HOW TO CREATE VR/AR CONTENT

CURRENT VR RESEARCH AROUND LEARNING

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TOM FURNESS: I AM THE GRANDFATHER OF VR

LET’S BUILD A VR HEAVEN

CONTRIBUTORS
You must have imagined what heaven looks like, perhaps the first time when you heard about Eden or paradise. The idea of heaven has been around since ancient Mesopotamia and it still shapes the lives today of 2.4 billion Christians, 1.7 billion Muslims, and people of some other faith traditions.

Recent advances in virtual reality, augmented reality, and mixed reality make it possible to bring an imagined heaven to earth, so you can experience what Eden or paradise looks like. But whose idea of heaven? Schoolchildren’s! Heaven as imagined by the world’s children.

The late Harvard neuropsychiatrist Robert Coles—who authored more than eighty books and 1300 articles, nearly all of them concerned with human moral, spiritual, and social sensibility and reasoning, relating especially to children—conducted a 30 year project on the inner lives of children. He gathered data from interviews and collected drawings from children initially to document the illusionary quality of religion, but was surprised to witness the positive and often life-changing quality of children’s spirituality. In The Spiritual Life of Children, Coles describes how his research helped him to see children as “young pilgrims” because across diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious boundaries, children demonstrate themselves to be spiritual beings in their paintings and by their own revelations in conversations.

The International Child Art Foundation—a nonprofit based in Washington, D.C. that serves American children as their national arts organization and the world’s children as their global arts organization—plans to build a VR Heaven by engaging some of the world’s most creative and imaginative children.

This year the ICAF is organizing its 6th Arts Olympiad—the world’s largest art program for schoolchildren. Through school art contests, most artistically creative students in participating U.S. school districts and nearly 100 countries will be selected. These creative students will convene for three days in July 2020 on The
National Mall in Washington, D.C. at their 6th World Children’s Festival (WCF)—the children’s “Olympics” held every four years. Unlike the Olympic Games, the purpose of the WCF is to imbue children’s creativity with empathy through collaborative activities and a celebration of diversity and unity.

Prior to the WCF, two hundred of the young delegates will be selected for the VR Heaven Project. These young artists will be asked to paint their visions of heaven and bring these masterpieces along to the WCF. On the first festival day, they will share their depictions of heaven and examine other’s works. On the second day, they will explore how they can collectively be more creative in depicting heaven. On the third day, they will collaboratively paint ten murals that depict their collective visions of heaven.

These ten murals will provide the basis for the construction of heaven as a VR experience. The VR Heaven will be built by the members of the Virtual World Society working under the direction of its founder, Professor Thomas Furness (see pages 30-31). One of the leading technology companies is likely to join this uniquely important global project.
The International Child Art Foundation (ICAF) provides unique learning opportunities that enhance global competency, sharpen creativity, and build a resume worthy of leading colleges and universities. For further information, send email to info@icaf.org.

You can subscribe online to ChildArt at ICAF.org. To post comments, visit www.facebook.com/ICAF.org.

P. O. Box 58133
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The International Child Art Foundation (ICAF) fosters schoolchildren’s creativity and develops empathy through the arts—children’s universal language.

Founded in 1997 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, ICAF is independently ranked among the 25 Top Children’s Charities in the United States.

Currently, students around the world are participating in the school-based 6th Arts Olympiad—a free program that fosters their creative development. In July 2020, they will convene on The National Mall at their 6th World Children’s Festival to develop mutual empathy.

Your support will help the ICAF democratize creativity and develop empathy universally as building blocks for global prosperity and world peace.

You can donate online at https://ICAF.org or mail your check to ICAF, Post Office Box 58133, Washington, D.C. 20037

Though many problems beset our nation and the world today, a sheer lack of creativity or empathy is too often their root cause. Creativity cultivates ideation, discovery and invention, while empathy grows compromise, consensus and collaborative innovation.

PLEASE ADOPT THE ICAF AS YOUR CHARITY THIS GIVING SEASON!