The better future is a teacher standing outside the headset, using AI inside the headset to give students learning encounters that were previously impossible.

It's a new possibility, and potentially a very strong alliance worth considering.

Side Note: The discussions behind the VR implementation are really not much different than those taking place all over the country right now over AI. The goal, is not to do fancy things, as awe for the technology wears of and seems to be doing so at an alarming rate. For example, the age group referred to as "Gen -Z" has developed a Specifc kind of tolarance bordering on distaste for anything produced by AI. The meaning of the technology comes from what it can do to enhance the human experience. VR is no different. If it's not being put into a position where the students can cognate the experience into something larger, grander, and elevates the curriculum, then the point of using it is mute.

Schools cannot sustain a VR program. But I know who can...

What does the most effective, most profitable, most welcoming VR inclusion rollout look like? What does the perfect brick-and-mortar rollout contain that makes it absolutely welcome in the school and places zero burden on the teachers? OK, hold out our hand and look at it. That's it. See it? Yup... Nothing. There is no perfect district rollout for VR that has these supportive angles, because as the system sits currently, and I'll say this with great confidence, it cannot be done.

So, that's it? It's impossible, and VR is doomed to be a toy for entertaining adult children? Not exactly. What I noted indicated that SCHOOL DISTRICTS are so entangled in legal nonsense, with their teachers swamped and brainwashed by old pedagogical methodologies, pacing guides, and overburdened technology support departments, that public brick-and-mortar districts simply cannot make it happen. They can't support it fiscally, can't support its infrastructure and management, and can't effectively convince or train teachers to learn how to integrate VR into the subjects they already teach. It's a system that means well, but, like in Monte Python's The Holy Grail, the modern public schools' ability to fight the good educational fight is akin to the Black Knight who's suffered just one too many "flesh wounds."

The will to fight is there. The ability to support that drive is not.

We will call it "MeridiaVR" and it's a company that doesn't exist yet, and it's the answer to VR integration into schools.

For the sake of our example, MeridiaVR will be the actor in our play that describes how VR could, in a very real and legitimate way. Would it be as effective as a full VR integration across, let's say, an entire science department? The simple answer is no. The complex answer, and probably the real one, is absolutely yes. In a high school science department with 12 teachers (based on anecdotal observations of working with and teaching science teachers over the decades), maybe 6 of them would know enough about VR to even want to be part of the implementation.

Of those six, maybe 2 have the technical expertise to actually set up and facilitate all the necessary elements to ensure the VR implementation goes well. Those are low numbers. Moreover, science teachers tend to be the most flexible, go-with-the-flow department among all departments in a traditional 9-12 senior high school. And if only 18% of those have the skills to manage the program, how would similar programs work in the other departments? In this case, no teachers need to prepare anything because Meridia VR does all the work for them.

The company would have several world-class technology and curriculum integration experts who can take hard-to-understand topics and create immersive and well-connected, narrative-driven experiences. Need to have the students experience the size of exponents in math? Want to have the students experience what it was like to be in a landing craft during D-Day? Want to see if students could jump off a building to experiment with different values for gravity? How about visiting Washington DC and walking around the White House, the Capitol Building, or the Washington Monument? Experiences like this already exist, but the idea would be to have Meridia VR custom-built experiences where students take on roles and act them out in VR as part of a larger experience that sparks spirited conversation afterward, as a good movie might on the ride home.

There could be experiences that cover a wide variety of level 1 (or tourist) experiences, like virtual field trips, all the way up to level 5 full-narrative-immersion VR sessions that a high school ASB group might take as part of an all-day leadership training, and everything in between.

It's one thing to sit and declare it conceptually, but what about practically? What would an actual business plan look like if one were to start MeridiaVR as a venture of their own?

Meridia:
VR Mobile Immersion Platform.

The following is an AI-assisted breakdown of a fictitious company called MeridiaVR. To help ensure its real-world accuracy, business and marketing expert Colin MB Cooper will assist in its generation and final grooming for your edification.

What Merida VR would offer:

Package 1: The Tourist Visa - Content-specific series of 5 curated experiences for (History, Science, PE, Math). Can support once class per period per day, assuming 6 periods a day (~55 minutes each). There are 5 tiers of immersion, each one more complex, longer, and increasingly more narrative-driven and with more take-away materials for in-class use than the last.

Package 2: The Team Builder - This would be a collection of 5-6 hair-raising, very high-stakes, mission-impossible-level experiences designed to have groups of 5 work as a team to find solutions to the most insane things they could possibly imagine. For example, imagine your team jumps out of a plane and one of your chutes doesn't open, and you have to work as a team as you fall to try to release the person's chute before the ground finds you. The idea is that everyone fails the first time, so they have to rethink their approach based on the data they collected during the first jump. Designed for leadership, ASB, and other special groups that need to build team cohesion. The event would last all day as they experience the various challenges and then debrief on them with the trained Meridia Staff.

Meridia VR would supply:

- Δ All the Headsets
- Δ Manage all of the charging
- Δ Manage all of the device software updates
- Δ Manage loading and updating apps
- Δ Literature for teachers on connecting their instructional content to the VR experiences.
- Δ Set up and stage the experience site
- Δ Carry out and guide the experiences through each cycle
- Δ Provide support materials for the students to take back to their classes to further connect to the content they are studying.
- Δ Their own WiFi connections if apps required internet interactivity or multiplayer experiences
- Δ Cleaning up the staging area

For simplicity, the following plan will make some fundamental assumptions:

- The business would be centered somewhere between Los Angeles and San Diego Counties - That's ~670 Middle Schools & ~715 High schools
- The client base would be middle schools and high schools in this area
- Meridia VR would only be able to serve 1 school at a time, with 1 mobile unit per day.
- Each school would likely be able to afford only one visit from a MEU (Mobile Experience Unit) per year
- Only 30% of schools have sufficient funds to contract with Meridia VR each year (MS = 210 & HS = 214)
- This includes Charter Schools, which are publicly funded
- To begin, there are 5 MEUs
- Each MEU consists of:
  - Cargo van, full sized, two passenger.
  - 45 headsets and 45 over-ear headphones
  - Marketing Banners, and set pieces for on-location experiences
  - a small electrical generator to power the rechargers,
  - a broadband Starlink unit for internet access - for experiences and for updates.
  - An MEU computer that runs Manage XR and manages maintenance for all headsets.
  - A mini-fridge
  - A microwave
  - A crew of 2 Meridia VR employees who are trained on all aspects of VR deployment
  - A modestly sized cabinet to store the various levels of materials for the different levels of instructional immersion.

MeridiaVR: From concept to invoice

Every VR program I've watched fail in a school failed after the demo.

The demo always works. Twenty headsets, one teacher who volunteered because she was curious, thirty kids who'll talk about it at dinner. Somebody takes a photo for the district newsletter. Everybody in the room agrees that this changes things, and for about forty minutes it does.

Then term ends. The teacher who volunteered picks up a second class and a duty rota. The headsets go into a cupboard because there's nowhere else to put them. Batteries go flat. Nobody runs the updates. By March the administrator account belongs to a member of staff who left in October, and eighteen months later a new superintendent finds a line in the budget and asks what happened to the VR money.

Nobody in that story did anything wrong. That's the part worth sitting with.

Dr. Temple has spent the preceding sections explaining why this keeps happening, and he puts the diagnosis better than I would. The will to fight is there. The ability to support that drive is not. Will is the bit everybody has. Ability has a price, and nobody wants to say the number out loud, because the number is where the enthusiasm goes to die.

So let's say it out loud. That's what he's asked me here to do.

What follows isn't an argument for MeridiaVR. Dr. Temple has already made that argument and I agree with it. This is the boring half: what it costs to put one van on the road, who signs the cheque for a day, what happens to the model when a school pays two thousand instead of three, and whether any of it grows beyond a single city. Four questions, and a company that can't answer all four is a slide deck.