VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE, REAL LEARNING

Matthew J. Sellwood[a], Wendy Zhang[b], Martin Brown[a], Philip Poronnik[a], Craig R. Campbell[a]

Presenting Author: Craig R. Campbell (c.campbell@sydney.edu.au)
[a] Media Lab, School of Medical Sciences, Faculty of Medicine and Health, The University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia
[b] School of Architecture and Design, The University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia

KEYWORDS: online learning, virtual tours, interdisciplinary learning

BACKGROUND
Students rarely appreciate the interdisciplinarity of medical sciences or reflect upon broader applications of their studies. COVID-19 forced us to develop online learning experiences that are authentic, engaging and scalable because our 540 first-year Human Biology students see the Medical Science program only as a gateway to studying Medicine. Our aim was to explore an environment that challenged their perceptions of medical science.

DESCRIPTION OF INTERVENTION
We used a Ricoh Theta Z1 360°-camera and 3DVista© software to create a virtual tour of the Chau Chak Wing Museum, a facility co-locating The University of Sydney's collections. The tour included mummified remains, Jericho skull, and anatomical clastic model, but also taxidermised thylacine, extant animals, and items of anthropologic interest. Local and remote students had identical experience of the collections.

RESULTS
Students engaged positively with an activity that was not demanding. Most reflected new appreciation of how historical models advance our understanding, especially with response to disease. Many also expressed a desire to visit the museum in person.

CONCLUSIONS
3D virtual experiences are increasingly popular for asynchronous learning, including remote/hazardous locations and workplace induction. This is a relatively inexpensive, easily developed and deployed option for online teaching in medical sciences, especially in laboratory demonstrations.

Proceedings of the Australian Conference on Science and Mathematics Education, 29 September - 1 October 2021, page 48, ISSN 2653-0481