

Superintendent's Highlight of the Week January 13, 2017

Did you know Plainview-Old Bethpage was the first district on Long Island to introduce **Z-Space** a virtual reality/3-D learning lab and named a School of Excellence in the process? During the 2014/15 school year, students were provided this new experience in science and technology but very quickly we expanded the instruction across all disciplines because of the overwhelmingly positive reception from our students. A Z-Space experience is now possible in all schools. It is not unusual to find middle school students engaged in such activities as creating a prosthetic hand and then printing it out on a 3-D printer.



Recently, 6th grade students in their Chinese classes at Mattlin Middle School visited the Z-Space Lab to enhance their learning of the caterpillar and Chinese language. Students had previously learned to read and write some characters from *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (in Chinese). They were now ready to test their knowledge using a dynamic virtual reality program – Cyber Science! After putting on their 3-D glasses, the children were excited to dive right into this program in order to explore the caterpillar's internal and external organs.

Students practiced their interpretive communication skills in the target language reading at the novice level. They also practiced character (vocabulary) identification. These represent important skills needed for successful early literacy development in Chinese.



Students will soon begin work on their presentation communication skills. They will use the target language to practice critical thinking: comparing the similarities and differences between human organs and those of the caterpillar.

The power of virtual reality is noteworthy. Our students have the ability to interact and share experiences with one another, problem solve, think critically and ask probing questions. Technology allows our students to reach beyond the limits of the classroom walls and the school day. We are transforming learning here at POB in a way that makes our students global ready.