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Mursion to partner with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in support of elevating educator preparation in the state

Mursion announces that they are working in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to use groundbreaking simulation technology to better prepare preservice teachers to serve English language learners and students with learning challenges.

Date:	December 1, 2016, San Francisco, CA
Contact Mursion :	Brentt Brown, Director of Communications brentt.brown@mursion.com , (415) 317-7594 www.mursion.com
Contact DESE:	Liz Losee, Director of Educator Preparation and Educator Assessment elosee@doe.mass.edu

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Embargoed until December 1, 2016

Mursion has been selected by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to design and deliver training simulations in mixed reality for nearly a dozen educator preparation programs across the state. Based on a competitive bidding process and with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Mursion was selected to:

- Design new student avatars, including an English Language Learner, a student with autism spectrum disorder, and a student with a specific learning disability
- Build an adult avatar that can be used to simulate parent-teacher conferences
- Create over a dozen new simulation scenarios, and assist faculty in embedding these scenarios into educator preparation courses
- Deliver simulations to over 1,500 candidates
- Construct and pilot performance tasks for an alternative certification examination for special education teachers

Simulation in virtual reality is an indispensable training and assessment tool for other high-stakes professions like the medical and aviation sectors. Simulation provides authentic opportunities for learners to practice and rehearse essential techniques in a low-risk environment. Last year, educator preparation programs in Massachusetts started applying this same approach to better prepare teachers for success. As Liz Losee, Director for Educator Preparation and Assessment explains, "we are excited about the opportunity to partner again with Mursion to further support the use of simulation in our educator preparation programs that give preservice teachers the opportunity to practice essential skills in low-risk settings in an effort to receive high quality feedback and improve their practice before beginning their student teaching experience."

Mursion's mixed reality platform uses a combination of artificial intelligence and live actors to deliver powerful simulations where avatars perform the most challenging interactions that learners will confront on the job, including the types of interactions that teachers have with

students and parents/guardians every day. An experimental research study showed that teachers who received four short simulations were significantly more likely to effectively implement a targeted instructional technique than their peers in a control group who received more traditional professional learning.

Mark Atkinson, Founder and CEO of Mursion, thinks this blend of technology and human performance creates a fully immersive and challenging simulation environment where learners are forced to take risks, from which they can learn how to improve their day-to-day performance. "For the types of instructional skills that are most important for preservice teachers to master, such as how to handle challenging behaviors or how to differentiate instruction for a diverse set of learners, Mursion offers student-teachers a safe space to reflect on their performance, learn from challenges and shortcomings and build the confidence necessary to hit the ground running when they enter real classrooms."