

Virtual Reality as a Method in Transformative Learning: A Strategy to Reduce Implicit Bias

Authors : Cory A. Logston

Abstract : It is imperative researchers continue to explore every transformative strategy to increase empathy and awareness of racial bias. Racism is a social and political concept that uses stereotypical ideology to highlight racial inequities. Everyone has biases they may not be aware of toward disparate out-groups. There is some form of racism in every profession; doctors, lawyers, and teachers are not immune. There have been numerous successful and unsuccessful strategies to motivate and transform an individual's unconscious biased attitudes. One method designed to induce a transformative experience and identify implicit bias is virtual reality (VR). VR is a technology designed to transport the user to a three-dimensional environment. In a virtual reality simulation, the viewer is immersed in a realistic interactive video taking on the perspective of a Black man. The viewer as the character experiences discrimination in various life circumstances growing up as a child into adulthood. For instance, the prejudice felt in school, as an adolescent encountering the police and false accusations in the workplace. Current research suggests that an immersive VR simulation can enhance self-awareness and become a transformative learning experience. This study uses virtual reality immersion and transformative learning theory to create empathy and identify any unintentional racial bias. Participants, White teachers, will experience a VR immersion to create awareness and identify implicit biases regarding Black students. The desired outcome provides a springboard to reconceptualize their own implicit bias. Virtual reality is gaining traction in the research world and promises to be an effective tool in the transformative learning process.

Keywords : empathy, implicit bias, transformative learning, virtual reality

Conference Title : ICTL 2021 : International Conference on Transformative Learning

Conference Location : Auckland, New Zealand

Conference Dates : December 01-02, 2021