

The Effectiveness of Virtual Reality Training for Improving Interpersonal Communication Skills: An Experimental Study

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Abstract : Virtual reality technology has emerged as a revolutionary power that can transform the education sector in many ways. VR environments can break the boundaries of the traditional classroom setting by immersing the students in realistic 3D environments where they can interact with virtual characters without fearing being judged. Communication skills are essential for every profession, and studies suggest the importance of implementing basic-level communication courses at both the school and graduate levels. Interpersonal communication is a skill that gains prominence as it is required in every profession. Traditional means of training have limitations for trainees as well as participants. The fear of being judged, the audience interaction, and other factors can affect the performance of a participant in a traditional classroom setting. Virtual reality offers a unique opportunity for its users to participate in training that does not set any boundaries that prevent the participants from performing in front of an audience. Specialised applications designed in VR headsets offer a range of training and exercises for participants without any time, space, or audience limitations. The present study aims at measuring the effectiveness of VR training in improving interpersonal communication skills among students. The study uses a mixed-method approach, in which a pre-and post-test will be designed to measure effectiveness. A preliminary selection process involving a questionnaire and a screening test will identify suitable candidates based on their current communication proficiency levels. Participants will undergo specialised training through the VR application Virtual Speech tailored for interpersonal communication and public speaking, designed to operate without the traditional constraints of time, space, or audience. The training's impact will subsequently be measured through situational exercises to engage the participants in interpersonal communication tasks, thereby assessing the improvement in their skills. The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide empirical evidence supporting VR technology's role in enhancing communication skills, thereby offering valuable insights for integrating VR-based methodologies into educational frameworks to prepare students more effectively for their professional futures.

Keywords : virtual reality, VR training, interpersonal communication, communication skills, 3D environments

Conference Title : ICECEEM 2024 : International Conference on Electronics, Communication Engineering and Electronic Media

Conference Location : Toronto, Canada

Conference Dates : June 13-14, 2024