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Using Virtual Reality to Teach Children with Autism

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Using Virtual Reality to Teach Children with Autism

It is believed that the inability to perspective-take, which includes inferring the beliefs, wants, or desires of another person, is at the core of the social, communicative, and imaginative impairments commonly exhibited by children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Given the key role of perspective-taking in interpersonal functioning (e.g. sharing, turn-taking, empathy, communication), teaching such skills is of great importance. Virtual Reality (VR) has shown recent promise in the instruction of children with ASD by combining both authentic experiences and a safe, controlled environment, but research is limited. The present study looks to evaluate the extent to which a newly developed VR program teaches perspective-taking skills that can be both maintained over time and applied to new scenarios. The program contains two instructional activities (1) 'Identifying Others Preferences' and (2) 'Understanding Others Visual Perspectives' that involve a collection of social scenarios relevant to the daily lives of children with ASD.