Avatar Mediated Self-Determined Learning in an Immersive 3-D Virtual Learning Environment
The evolution of virtual learning has seen a progression of increasing interactivity and immersion

- Text
- Learning Management System (LMS)
- 3-D Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)
The Study

- This qualitative case study assessed the phenomenon of avatar-mediated self-determined learning of current and aspiring entrepreneurs in an immersive three-dimensional (3-D) virtual learning environment (VLE) within the Second Life Platform.
- Theoretical framework - Heutagogy (Self-determined learning)
- Data sources - Interview, Observation, Chat Transcripts
- Participants were fully self-determined in evaluation and selection of their training needs, learning materials, and the evaluation of the outcomes of the learning session.
The Study

- **RQ1:** How do participant experiences of avatar-mediated self-determined learning (heutagogy) in entrepreneurial training in a 3-D virtual learning environment influence the perceived effectiveness of the experience on entrepreneurial knowledge of aspiring and current entrepreneurs?

- **RQ2:** How do participant experiences of avatar-mediated self-determined learning (heutagogy) in entrepreneurial training in a 3-D virtual learning environment influence the perceived effectiveness of the experience on entrepreneurial capability in aspiring and current entrepreneurs?
The Participants

- Participants consisted of a purposive sample of ten current and aspiring entrepreneurs with virtual world experience, who provided a variety of perspectives based on entrepreneurial activity (e.g. for or non-profit), experience (e.g. current or aspiring), industry, and gender.

- 30% Female 70% Male
- 100% at least some college - 60% college graduates
- 70% non-profit 30% for-profit organizations
- Representing 5 unique Industry Codes
The Results

- The experience of avatar-mediated self-determined (heutagogy) entrepreneurial training in a virtual learning environment was generally perceived as beneficial in the development of entrepreneurial knowledge and capabilities.
- Participants found the experience to be highly integrative.
- Immersive experience supports learning focus, mindspace.
- Use of avatar reduced inhibition and enhanced learning.
The Results

- The use of a web-based platform that allowed participants to access the VLE through a standardized interface mitigated many of the technical challenges associated with hardware and software requirements and maintenance that can present a significant barrier to participant experiences in 3-D VLEs.

- The intersection avatar-mediated self-determined learning in an immersive 3-D VLE represents a new evolution in technology-assisted learning, and the incorporation of gamification concepts can advance research and practice in instructional design strategies and techniques for immersive 3-D VLEs.
Practical Applications

- The applied benefits of 3-D VLEs for training and development experiences include:
  - 24/7 availability
  - Virtual co-location for remote workers
  - Responsive content development and rapid deployment
- Beyond training and development, 3-D VLEs may be extended to other information development applications, for example:
  - Workshopping new ideas and strategies
  - Development and Testing of Customer Interaction Procedures and Strategies
  - Team-building events
  - Providing a cost-effective and “green” alternative to business travel
Questions