

Measuring What Matters: Lessons Learned From Taking Virtual Human Patients from Ideation to Realization

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Abstract: Did you know you've likely been seen by a nurse that has been trained using virtual patients to improve their critical thinking and communication skills? In this talk, we will discuss the process of how the idea of talking with a virtual human to improve communication skills with real people progressed from conceptualization to realization. We will explore key findings in how people react to virtual humans as well as lessons learned from creating Shadow Health to bring virtual human patients into curricula at thousands of universities and colleges. Finally, I will use the experience of getting virtual patients to impact our lives as to motivate everyone to continually reevaluate how we measure our progress and impact of our research and our careers. The goal of this talk is to provide the audience insights into transdisciplinary collaboration, developing an entrepreneurial mindset, and a metacognitive reassessment of where we are in our research careers.

Biography: Benjamin Lok (<https://www.lokben.com/>) is a Professor in the Computer and Information Sciences and Engineering Department at the University of Florida and entrepreneur, having previously co-founded “*Shadow Health*” (now a part of Elsevier). Professor Lok's research focuses on using virtual humans and mixed reality to train communication skills within the areas of virtual environments, human-computer interaction, and computer graphics. Professor Lok received a Ph. D. in 2002 from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Professor Lok has received the UF Innovator of the Year Award (2019), a UF Term Professorship (2017-2020), the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering Faculty Mentoring Award (2016), a NSF Career Award (2007-2012), and the UF ACM CISE Teacher of the Year Award in 2005-2006. He and his students in the Virtual Experiences Research Group have received Best Paper Awards at IVA 2019, IEEE VR 2008, and ACM I3D (Top 3, 2003). He was the chair of the Steering Committee of the IEEE Virtual Reality conference (2018-2021). He has been the general co-chair of IEEE VR 2014 and IEEE VR 2013, and program co-chaired the ACM VRST 2009, IEEE Virtual Reality 2010, and IEEE Virtual Reality 2011 conferences. Professor Lok is a journal associate editor of IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics.

