Foreword

In this rich and wide-ranging book the authors interweave multidisciplinary themes, insights, and applications with virtual learning. The book starts with an examination of currents and complexities of philosophical thought underpinning virtual learning. The influence of Plato, Descartes, Locke, Kant, Heidegger, and Buber are poignantly related to the evolving ways selfhood, community, and society are increasingly being shaped by people’s experience with virtual reality. The reader can trace the influence of European idealism and American transcendentalism upon the educators contributing chapters to this book. Indeed, the influence of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau can be clearly perceived in the ways the authors offer new views of self and society for the reader to consider.

What is striking is the way the authors recast arguments for how individual character is molded by the environment in contemporary terms and context with virtual learning. The principles and practices of education, using virtual reality, is framed around a refreshing form of progressive thought for designing virtual learning landscapes to help bridge between the isolated ways people can live and learn with learning in community for the common good in society.

It is immensely satisfying to see an edited book on virtual learning draw upon deep insights from the influence of eighteenth century German philosophy on the American mind for pragmatic applications of virtual reality for educating digital citizens. The chapters not only offer a solid foundation for understanding the emerging applications of virtual reality to learning but also reveal transparency not typically offered in scholastic publications. The authors offer straightforward revelations of struggles and lessons learned while pioneering innovative ways for developmentally shaping selfhood, digital literacies, and learning communities. Collectively, the insights offered in this book, from the valorization prospects of virtual learning, suggests a hopeful future in ways people, community, and society can be transformed for the common good unimaginable by our current generation.

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