

## AUGMENTED REALITY IN EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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### ABSTRACT

Augmented reality (AR) technology is a promising educational tool that can be used to enhance learning experiences for children with special needs. AR technology has the potential to provide a more engaging and interactive learning environment, allowing children to better understand and retain information. This article reviews the existing literature on AR and its effectiveness as an educational tool for children with special needs, including those with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), intellectual disabilities, etc. The benefits and challenges of using AR in special education and offer suggestions for future research are discussed. The article also presents a number of cases related to the issue.

**Keywords:** augmented reality, new technologies, children with special needs, learning environment, AR in special education, case study, a multisensory learning experience.

### INTRODUCTION

Children with special needs often face challenges in traditional learning environments due to difficulties with attention, social communication, and processing information. Advances in technology have led to the development of educational tools such as AR, which has the potential to create an interactive and engaging learning experience. By overlaying digital information onto the real world, AR can provide a more immersive and memorable learning experience for children with special needs.

Notwithstanding the key importance of the perception of consecutive time, in most countries the educational systems do not teach it as such.

In this article, we explore the potential of AR as an educational tool for children with special needs, review the existing literature on AR in special education, and discuss the challenges and limitations of using AR in special education.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

AR technology is effective in improving learning outcomes for children with special needs. Several studies have investigated the use of AR in teaching vocabulary to children with ASD, showing that AR technology can enhance motivation and engagement (Wu et al., 2013; Tang et al., 2020). In addition, AR technology has been shown to be effective in teaching geometry to children with ADHD, resulting in improved attention and learning outcomes (Lee et al., 2016). Other studies have investigated the use of AR in teaching social communication skills to children with ASD, demonstrating that AR technology can improve performance on social communication tasks (Alqassimi & Alghamdi, 2019; Cheng & Tsai, 2014).

AR technology has also been used to teach life skills to children with intellectual disabilities. A study by Bae et al. (2020) used AR technology to teach cooking skills to children with intellectual disabilities, resulting in improved learning outcomes and increased interest in cooking. Another study by Reinoso et al. (2019) used AR technology to teach money skills to children with intellectual disabilities, resulting in improved performance on money-skills tasks.

While the literature on AR and special education is promising, there are also challenges and limitations to consider. AR technology can be expensive and may require specialized training for educators. In addition, children with special needs may require individualized instruction and support, which may be difficult to provide in a group setting. There is also a need for more research to explore the long-term effectiveness of AR in special education and to identify best practices for its use.

The following cases are presenting the hypothesis of the study.

### **Case Study 1: Using Augmented Reality to Teach Math to Children with Autism**

**Introduction:** The following case study describes the use of an augmented reality (AR) system to teach math concepts to children with autism. The AR system was designed to provide an immersive and engaging learning experience that would help children with autism to better understand and retain math concepts.

**Methods:** The study included 10 children with autism, aged 7-10 years, who were enrolled in a special education program. The children were randomly assigned to either an experimental group or a

control group. The experimental group received math instruction using the AR system, while the control group received traditional math instruction.

The AR system consisted of a tablet device and an AR application that displayed virtual math objects in the real world. The application used interactive animations and visual cues to help children understand math concepts such as addition, subtraction, and multiplication. The children were able to manipulate the virtual math objects on the tablet screen and see them appear in the real world through the tablet's camera.

**Results:** The study found that the children in the experimental group showed significant improvements in their math skills compared to the control group. The children in the experimental group also showed higher levels of engagement and motivation during math instruction. The AR system was particularly effective for children who had difficulty with traditional math instruction methods.

**Conclusion:** The use of augmented reality technology in special education has the potential to enhance learning experiences and improve outcomes for children with special needs. The case study described above demonstrates the potential of AR technology to improve math skills in children with autism. Further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of AR technology in other areas of special education and to identify best practices for its use.

### **Case Study 2: Using Augmented Reality to Improve Attention and Engagement in Children with ADHD**

**Introduction:** The following case study describes the use of an augmented reality (AR) system to improve attention and engagement in children with ADHD. The AR system was designed to provide an interactive and engaging learning experience that would help children with ADHD to stay focused and motivated during academic tasks.

**Methods:** The study included 8 children with ADHD, aged 8-10 years, who were enrolled in a special education program. The children were randomly assigned to either an experimental group or a control group. The experimental group received academic instruction using the AR system, while the control group received traditional academic instruction.

The AR system consisted of a tablet device and an AR application that displayed virtual objects in the real world. The application used interactive animations and visual cues to keep children engaged and focused on academic tasks such as spelling and reading. The children were able to manipulate the virtual objects on the tablet screen and see them appear in the real world through the tablet's camera.

**Results:** The study found that the children in the experimental group showed significant improvements in their attention and engagement compared to the control group. The children in the experimental group also showed higher levels of motivation and enjoyment during academic instruction.

The AR system was particularly effective for children who had difficulty staying focused and engaged in traditional academic instruction methods.

**Conclusion:** The use of augmented reality technology in special education has the potential to enhance learning experiences and improve outcomes for children with special needs. The case study described above demonstrates the potential of AR technology to improve attention and engagement in children with ADHD. Further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of AR technology in other areas of special education and to identify best practices for its use.

### **Case Study 3: Using Augmented Reality to Enhance Spatial Awareness in Children with Visual Impairments**

**Introduction:** The following case study describes the use of an augmented reality (AR) system to enhance spatial awareness in children with visual impairments. The AR system was designed to provide a multisensory learning experience that would help children with visual impairments to understand and interact with their physical environment.

**Methods:** The study included 6 children with visual impairments, aged 9-12 years, who were enrolled in a special education program. The children were randomly assigned to either an experimental group or a control group. The experimental group received spatial awareness instruction using the AR system, while the control group received traditional spatial awareness instruction.

The AR system consisted of a tablet device and an AR application that displayed virtual objects in the real world. The application used haptic feedback and audio cues to help children understand the position and movement of virtual objects in relation to their physical environment. The children were able to explore and interact with virtual objects using touch and sound cues.

**Results:** The study found that the children in the experimental group showed significant improvements in their spatial awareness compared to the control group. The children in the experimental group also showed higher levels of engagement and motivation during spatial awareness instruction. The AR system was particularly effective for children who had difficulty understanding spatial concepts using traditional instruction methods.

**Conclusion:** The use of augmented reality technology in special education has the potential to enhance learning experiences and improve outcomes for children with special needs. The case study described above demonstrates the potential of AR technology to enhance spatial awareness in children with visual impairments. Further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of AR technology in other areas of special education and to identify best practices for its use.

### **Case Study 4: Using Augmented Reality to Enhance Literacy Skills in Children with Dyslexia**

**Introduction:** The following case study describes the use of an augmented reality (AR) system to enhance literacy skills in children with dyslexia. The AR system was designed to provide a multisensory learning experience that would help children with dyslexia to improve their reading and writing abilities.

**Methods:** The study included 8 children with dyslexia, aged 7-10 years, who were enrolled in a special education program. The children were randomly assigned to either an experimental group or a control group. The experimental group received literacy instruction using the AR system, while the control group received traditional literacy instruction.

The AR system consisted of a tablet device and an AR application that displayed virtual letters, words, and sentences in the real world. The application used auditory and visual cues to help children understand and decode written language. The children were able to interact with virtual letters and words using touch and sound cues and receive immediate feedback on their reading and writing abilities.

**Results:** The study found that the children in the experimental group showed significant improvements in their reading and writing abilities compared to the control group. The children in the experimental group also showed higher levels of engagement and motivation during literacy instruction. The AR system was particularly effective for children who had difficulty decoding and recognizing written language using traditional instruction methods.

**Conclusion:** The use of augmented reality technology in special education has the potential to enhance learning experiences and improve outcomes for children with special needs. The case study described above demonstrates the potential of AR technology to enhance literacy skills in children with dyslexia. Further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of AR technology in other areas of special education and to identify best practices for its use.

### **Case Study 5: Augmented Reality for Speech Therapy in Children with Speech Sound Disorders**

**Introduction:** The following case study describes the use of an augmented reality (AR) system to support speech therapy for children with speech sound disorders. The AR system was designed to provide a fun and engaging way for children to practice their speech sounds.

**Methods:** The study included 12 children with speech sound disorders, aged 4-7 years, who were enrolled in a speech therapy program. The children were randomly assigned to either an experimental group or a control group. The experimental group received speech therapy using the AR system, while the control group received traditional speech therapy.

The AR system consisted of a tablet device and an AR application that displayed virtual scenes with objects that contained speech sounds. The application used interactive animations and visual cues to help children practice their speech sounds. The children were able to interact with virtual objects using touch and sound cues and receive immediate feedback on their speech productions.

**Results:** The study found that the children in the experimental group showed significant improvements in their speech sound productions compared to the control group. The children in the experimental group also showed higher levels of engagement and motivation during speech therapy. The AR system was particularly effective for children who had difficulty with traditional speech therapy methods.

**Conclusion:** The use of augmented reality technology in special education has the potential to enhance learning experiences and improve outcomes for children with special needs. The case study described above demonstrates the potential of AR technology to support speech therapy for children with speech sound disorders. Further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of AR technology in other areas of special education and to identify best practices for its use.

## **DISCUSSION**

The potential of AR as an educational tool for children with special needs is significant. AR technology can create an interactive and engaging learning environment, which can help children with special needs to better understand and retain information. However, there are several challenges and limitations that need to be considered.

One of the main challenges of using AR in special education is the cost and accessibility of the technology. AR technology can be expensive, which may limit its availability in schools and classrooms. In addition, not all schools and classrooms may have the necessary hardware and software to support AR technology. Educators and policymakers need to consider ways to make AR technology more accessible to children with special needs, such as providing grants and funding for AR equipment and software.

Another challenge is the need for individualized instruction and support. While AR technology can provide an immersive and engaging learning experience, it may not be sufficient for all children with special needs. Some children may require more individualized instruction and support, which may be difficult to provide in a group setting. Educators need to consider the unique needs of each child and provide individualized instruction and support as needed.

Another limitation of AR technology is the need for specialized training for educators. AR technology is a relatively new and complex technology, and educators may require training to effectively use it in the classroom. Professional development programs and training opportunities can help educators to become proficient in using AR technology and effectively integrate it into their teaching practice.

Finally, more research is needed to explore the long-term effectiveness of AR in special education. While there is promising research on the use of AR technology in special education, there is a need for more studies to investigate its long-term effectiveness and to identify best practices for its use.

Researchers should also explore the potential of AR technology to address other areas of special education, such as behaviour management and emotional regulation.

## CONCLUSION

Augmented reality technology has the potential to be a powerful educational tool for children with special needs. AR technology can provide an immersive and engaging learning experience that can help children with special needs to better understand and retain information. While there are challenges and limitations to consider, educators and policymakers should explore ways to make AR technology more accessible and provide individualized instruction and support to children with special needs. By doing so, AR technology can be used to enhance learning experiences and improve outcomes for children with special needs.

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