Innovations in Virtual Reality – The Changing Face of Simulation based Education

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Today, there is a tremendous interest in providing a wider range of training and educational activities using Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR). In fact, VR and AR have been touted as the future of simulation and training for many years now, but they have not lived up to their promise over time. New hardware and software that is available now have created a resurgence in VR in the past five years. This is opening the doors to opportunities for affordable enquiry and experience that were not possible until now. I will share my vision of where VR and AR are heading by providing some real-life applications of this technology, including many developed at our center – with focus on medical and healthcare related fields. Finally, I will provide a brief overview of the new Carle Illinois Engineering based College of Medicine slated to open at Urbana-Champaign in 2018, and some innovative ideas we are exploring to enhance educational experience through new technologies.