

Teleporting through virtual environments: Benefits of navigational feedback and practice

Jonathan W. Kelly^{1*}, Nicole Powell², Melynda Hoover² and Stephen B. Gilbert²

¹Department of Psychology, Iowa State University, 1347 Lagomarcino Hall, 901 Stange Rd., Ames, 50011, IA, USA.

²Virtual Reality Applications Center, Iowa State University, 1620 Howe Hall, 537 Bissell Rd., Ames, 50011, IA, USA.

*Corresponding author(s). E-mail(s): jonkelly@iastate.edu;

Contributing authors: nrpowell@iastate.edu; mhoover@iastate.edu; gilbert@iastate.edu;

Abstract

Virtual environments (VEs) can be infinitely large, but movement of the virtual reality (VR) user is constrained by the surrounding real environment. Teleporting has become a popular locomotion interface to allow complete exploration of the VE. To teleport, the user selects the intended position (and sometimes orientation) before being instantly transported to that location. However, locomotion interfaces such as teleporting can cause disorientation. This experiment explored whether practice and feedback when using the teleporting interface can reduce disorientation. VR headset owners participated remotely. On each trial of a triangle completion task the participant traveled along two path legs through a VE before attempting to point to the path origin. Travel was completed with one of two teleporting interfaces that differed in the availability of rotational self-motion cues. Participants in the feedback condition received feedback about their pointing accuracy. For both teleporting interfaces tested, feedback caused significant improvement in pointing performance, and practice alone caused only marginal improvement. These results suggest that disorientation in VR can be reduced through feedback-based training.

Keywords: Virtual reality, Locomotion interface, Teleporting, Navigation, Feedback, Remote data collection

1 Introduction

Many virtual reality (VR) systems allow the user to explore the virtual environment (VE) by physically walking and turning, which requires no training because it leverages human experience with real world locomotion. But walking is only possible within small areas due to physical space limitations (e.g., obstacles) in the user's real environment. Locomotion interfaces are needed to enable movement through larger spaces. These

interfaces commonly focus on translation (i.e., change in position) while allowing for full body rotation. However, interfaces that also enable virtual rotation without real body rotation are well suited to certain situations and individuals (e.g., a user seated on an airplane, or a user with mobility impairment).

One popular locomotion interface for VR is teleportation, also referred to as jumping [3]. To teleport, the user selects a position (and sometimes an orientation) in the VE and is instantly

repositioned at the selected location. The teleporting interface is popular in part because it is easy to use [4, 22] and does not typically contribute to cybersickness [9, 22, 26, 38]. Despite these advantages, users often prefer real walking over teleporting [34]. It has been suggested that the teleporting interface degrades the user's presence, or experience of being in the virtual environment [36], perhaps because teleporting creates discontinuities in the user's experience of space compared to continuous locomotion. However, research evidence for the assertion that teleporting degrades presence has typically produced null results [22] or non-significant trends in the predicted direction [12, 34]. Some implementations of the teleporting interface blend walking with teleporting so that the user can walk within the open space while teleporting is used to redirect them away from physical boundaries [11, 24].

A defining characteristic of the teleporting interface is that it lacks some or all body-based and visual self-motion cues that normally accompany movement through the real world. This lack of self-motion information has clear negative implications for spatial updating, which is the process of updating self-location relative to the environment during travel [30]. Spatial updating, sometimes referred to as path integration, involves continuous updating of changing self-to-object relationships during movement. Spatial updating depends heavily on kinesthetic and vestibular self-motion cues that originate from the body. For example, performance on a triangle completion task (travel two outbound path legs before pointing or returning to the path origin) is impaired when body-based cues are experimentally disrupted or eliminated [6, 20, 35]. Although visual motion (i.e., optic flow) can be sufficient for spatial updating [2, 33, 39], its role may be smaller than that of body-based cues: Spatial updating of rotations is worse with visual cues compared to body-based cues [40], and the impact of visual self-motion can be minimal when body-based cues are available [14]. Spatial updating is thought to play an important role in cognitive map formation [37], and locomotion interfaces that exclude body-based self-motion cues during exploration also negatively affect the accuracy of the acquired cognitive map [5, 23].

One recent study explored the effects of the teleporting interface on spatial updating using a

triangle completion task [7]. Triangle completion performance was best when the outbound path was traversed by walking, worse when teleporting to translate and using the body to rotate (herein referred to as partially concordant teleporting), and worse yet when teleporting to translate and to rotate (herein discordant teleporting; also see [8, 15, 16, 18]). The finding that teleporting led to worse triangle completion is not surprising, given the importance of self-motion cues to spatial updating. The current study explored whether practice and feedback when teleporting would lead to improvements in navigation, as measured through triangle completion.

A few studies have investigated whether spatial updating is related to experience. In one study [25], participants repeatedly turned counterclockwise without vision until they believed they had rotated by a specified angle. Practice rotating 45 degrees without feedback (i.e., without any indication of their accuracy) led to improved accuracy for 45 degree rotations as well as 30 degree rotations. Practice with feedback led to greater improvement than practice alone, both for the 45 degree rotation and the 30 degree rotation. It therefore seems possible that practice and feedback on the triangle completion task could lead to performance improvement, since accurate spatial updating during rotation is a key component of the triangle completion task. However, this possibility has not been tested.

Other research has compared spatial updating performance by movement experts, such as dancers and gymnasts, with that of non-experts. The rationale behind these comparisons is that dancing and gymnastics both emphasize good control over body movements as well as awareness of one's position and orientation in space, which may be associated with superior spatial updating performance. One study [32] compared triangle completion performance by gymnasts and non-gymnasts. Blindfolded participants walked two outbound path legs before attempting to walk to the path origin. Response direction was more accurate among gymnasts compared to non-gymnasts, although response distance was comparable between groups.

Another study [1] compared performance by dancers and non-dancers on a VR-based triangle completion task in which the outbound path was traversed by walking, teleporting, or joystick

locomotion. On all three forms of locomotion, no significant differences were found between dancers and non-dancers. However, follow-up analyses indicated that engagement in spatial activities (e.g., sports, arts, and crafts) predicted task performance across all participants.

Another study [31] found that experienced dancers performed better than non-dancers at a task in which they walked a short distance through a VE before pointing to multiple previously memorized locations. The task was somewhat more complex than triangle completion, as there were multiple locations to be remembered and the path included more turns. The researchers also found that completing a months-long dance class led to significant gains in task performance by the non-dancers (i.e., those who were initially non-dancers prior to the class), suggesting a causal relationship. It is unclear why dancers performed better than non-dancers in this study and not in the previously described study [1]. Both studies used similar criteria for defining dance expertise. It is possible that task differences between the experiments (e.g., remembering one versus multiple locations) were important.

In summary, there is some evidence that movement expertise gained through dancing, gymnastics, and other spatial behaviors is associated with spatial updating performance [1, 31, 32]. Furthermore, body rotation practice and feedback both cause improvements in accuracy [25]. It is therefore plausible that both practice and feedback will lead to improvements on a triangle completion task in VR. This may be particularly true when triangle completion involves body movement, as when walking or using a locomotion interface that preserves at least some body movement, such as the partially concordant teleporting interface (teleport to translate but turn the body to rotate). It is less clear whether practice and feedback will lead to similar improvements when using a locomotion interface that does not include body movement, such as the discordant teleporting interface (teleport to translate and rotate).

2 Experiment overview and hypotheses

Participants performed three blocks of triangle completion trials using one of two teleporting

interfaces that differed in available rotational self-motion cues: partially concordant and discordant teleporting. The first and third blocks were performed without feedback. The second block of trials included performance-based feedback for participants in the feedback condition, but not in the no feedback condition. The primary hypothesis was that improvement in task errors from block 1 to block 3 would be greater when feedback was provided. Further, discordant teleporting was expected to produce larger errors overall than partially concordant teleporting, replicating past research [7, 16]. Finally, self-assessed workload was expected to be higher when using the discordant teleporting interface compared to the partially concordant interface. No prediction was made regarding the effect of practice alone, nor whether improvement would be greater for one interface compared to the other. The research design, hypotheses, and analyses were pre-registered on the Open Science Framework: <https://osf.io/hgf6p/>.

3 Method

3.1 Participants

The target sample size was 76 total participants, corresponding to 19 participants in each of 4 between-participant conditions. Sample size was estimated by conducting a power analysis (G*Power v3.1) with the following parameters: one-tailed paired samples t-test between two dependent means, corresponding to the comparison between pre-feedback and post-feedback trials, Cohen's $d = .6$, alpha = .05, minimum power needed to detect an effect = .80. Effect size was chosen because a medium-to-large effect size would be useful for practical application of the result as a training tool, but a small effect would limit the practical value of a potential training tool. The total participant number was closely monitored during recruitment, but could not be perfectly controlled (e.g., a participant recruited through social media might sign up after the target sample was reached).

Eighty-seven participants (72 men, 11 women, 3 other, 1 declined to state) were recruited through Prolific (an online work site) or social media advertisement. Participants were paid \$10 for completion of the study. To be eligible, participants had

to be 18 years or older and currently residing in the United States. They also had to have a compatible HMD (Oculus Rift, Oculus Rift S, Oculus Quest, HTC Vive, HTC Vive Pro, or Valve Index) connected to SteamVR. Data from three participants (2 male participants and 1 female participant) were removed as outliers (see Results). Thus, the total sample size was 84 participants. The sample size in each of the four conditions ranged from 19 to 22 participants.

Participants in the feedback condition were recruited first and were randomly assigned to one of the two locomotion interfaces. Participants in the no feedback condition were recruited after data from the feedback condition were collected, and those participants were also randomly assigned to one of the two locomotion interfaces.

3.2 Design

The study followed a 2 (interface: partially concordant teleporting or discordant teleporting) by 2 (feedback condition: feedback or no feedback) by 3 (block) mixed design. The interface and feedback conditions were manipulated between participants and the block was manipulated within participant.

All participants completed 48 trials of a triangle completion task. Trials were split into three blocks: 12 trials in Block 1, 24 trials in Block 2, and 12 trials in Block 3. Participants in the feedback condition received feedback about their performance on each trial during Block 2, whereas participants in the no feedback condition did not receive feedback. No feedback was provided in blocks 1 and 3. For participants in the no feedback condition, there was no difference between trials in blocks 1, 2, and 3 (other than the number of trials in each block).

The path used for the triangle completion task was defined by two outbound path legs marked by vertical posts. The path angle (i.e., the angle formed by the intersection of the two path legs) was randomly selected on each trial from 24 possible angles ranging from -135° to $+135^\circ$ in 11.25° increments, excluding 0° . The length of each path leg was randomly selected on each trial to be 6.1, 6.7, or 7.3 meters. Pointing location, pointing response time, and travel time (i.e., time to traverse the two outbound path legs) were recorded on each trial.

3.3 Stimuli

The primary VE was a large 70 by 70 meter warehouse containing shipping containers and cardboard boxes stacked on shelves, all of which were positioned along the room walls, leaving the center of the room open (see Figure 1). This VE was chosen because it allowed participants to combine path-based information (i.e., information acquired by traversing the outbound path) with landmark-based information. Further, the warehouse VE was chosen for its ecological validity, since most VEs have at least some landmarks. The VE was built with the Unity game engine. A practice VE, which was used for participants to familiarize themselves with the interface and task, contained only a rectangular floor outlined by distinct colors on each edge.

The outbound path on triangle completion trials was marked by a sequence of cylindrical posts, each 1 meter tall and .25 meters in diameter. A green post was positioned at the path origin, a yellow post was positioned at the end of the first path leg, and a red post was positioned at the end of the second path leg. An arrow placed at the base of each post indicated the direction of the next post in the sequence. The arrow on the base of the red post pointed in the same direction as the prior arrow. The arrows were necessary to specify the target orientation when using the discordant teleporting interface, but they were also present when using the partially concordant teleporting interface.

When using the partially concordant teleporting interface, the participant teleported to translate and rotated the body to rotate. To use the partially concordant teleporting interface, the participant pressed and held the thumb-pad button on their controller to bring up a small white ring on the ground plane, connected to their controller by a thin red line. While holding the button, the participant positioned the white ring by pointing the controller at the intended position on the ground plane (similar to pointing a laser pointer). The ring snapped to the location of the post when it was within a short distance to ensure that no errors occurred when choosing the teleport location. Further, the participant was prevented from teleporting to any other location besides the next post in the sequence. Releasing the button caused the participant to be instantly teleported

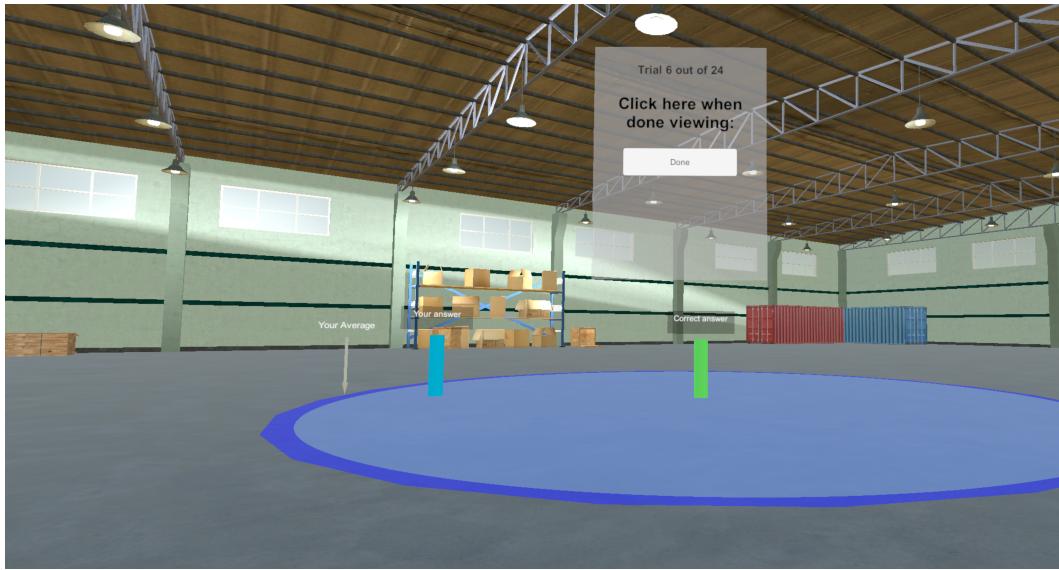


Fig. 1 Participant's view of the feedback provided during Block 2 in the feedback condition. The green post represents the correct location of the path origin. The blue post represents the participant's response on that trial. The blue circle represents the average distance of the participant's response from the path origin based on the preceding Block 2 trials.

to the selected position. Rotations were achieved by physically rotating the body.

When using the discordant teleporting interface, the participant teleported to translate and to rotate. To use the discordant teleporting interface, the participant pressed and held the thumb-pad button on their controller to bring up an oriented purple ring on the ground plane, connected to their controller by a thin red line. While holding the button, the participant positioned the purple ring by pointing the controller and oriented the ring by sliding their thumb around the thumb pad. The ring snapped to the location and orientation of the post when it was within a short distance. Further, the participant was prevented from teleporting to any other location besides the next post in the sequence. Releasing the button caused the participant to be instantly teleported to the selected position and orientation.

3.4 Procedure

The participant first completed a screening questionnaire to determine eligibility, followed by the informed consent form. The participant was then directed to a website with instructions about how to download and run the Unity VR software and how to perform the triangle completion task. The instructions specified that the participant should

attempt to remember the location of the path origin (the green post), traverse the outbound path, and then point back to the path origin. The participant was asked to watch a video demonstrating the task with the relevant teleporting interface. The participant was instructed to stand when completing the task, and eye height in the VE corresponded to their standing height (as measured by their tracking system).

The participant then donned their HMD and performed at least two practice trials of the triangle completion task within the practice VE. System calibration was limited to that which occurred when installing SteamVR, which includes calibration of floor height and room dimensions. On each trial, the participant traveled to a sequence of three posts before attempting to point to the unseen location of the path origin. At the beginning of each trial, a green post appeared at the location of the path origin. The participant then teleported to the green post, which disappeared upon their arrival. A yellow post then appeared and the participant teleported to the location of the yellow post, which disappeared upon arrival. Finally, a red post appeared at the location of the path terminus. Possible teleport locations were restricted to the post location, which prevented multiple teleports on a single path leg. Upon teleporting to the red post, the participant positioned

a small blue circle on the ground plane to indicate the remembered location of the path origin.

After two practice trials, the participant could decide whether to continue practice or move on to the formal experiment. Upon beginning the experiment, the participant completed three blocks of triangle completion trials. Only trials in Block 2 of the feedback condition provided feedback about the participant's performance. Feedback (see Figure 1) was provided by displaying a blue post at the location of the participant's response, labeled "Your answer," and a green post at the location of the path origin, labeled "Correct answer." Additionally, a blue circle was centered on the path origin and the circle's radius corresponded to a running average of the absolute distance of the response from the path origin, averaged across all of the participant's Block 2 responses. This feedback remained visible until the participant clicked to proceed to the next trial.

The participant was prompted after each trial block to indicate whether they experienced any difficulties in the preceding block. The participant was also offered an opportunity to take a break between blocks. Average time for an individual trial was less than 20 seconds. After completing all three blocks of trials, the participant removed the headset and completed surveys about perceived workload (NASA task load index or TLX [13]), cybersickness (select questions from the virtual reality neuroscience questionnaire [21]), demographics, VR usage, video game experience, and strategies used when performing the task.

4 Results

The primary dependent measure was absolute distance error, defined as the absolute distance between the location of the response and the location of the path origin. Data from three participants were removed due to very large errors (absolute distance error more than 3 standard deviations from the condition mean). Of the remaining 84 participants, average age was 26.2 years ($SD = 7.0$). The specific HMD used by participants, in order of frequency, included Oculus Quest (34), Oculus Rift S (17), Valve Index (13), HTC Vive (13), Oculus Rift (4), and HTC Vive Pro (2). Task performance did not differ across the different HMD types. When asked about frequency of VR use, the majority of participants (n

= 55) indicated that they used VR one or more times per week, with an average VR session length of 76.5 minutes ($SD = 55.3$). Participants reported playing video games (not necessarily in VR) an average of 35.6 hours per week ($SD = 21.8$), which is consistent with recent research on HMD owners [17].

Absolute distance errors were not normally distributed so a log transformation was used to reduce skewness [28].¹ The result was a more normal distribution with minimal skewness and similar variances across conditions compared to the untransformed data. Analyses were conducted using the log-transformed data. However, the figures are presented using untransformed data for ease of interpretation. Equivalent figures showing log-transformed data can be found on the Open Science Framework: (<https://osf.io/hgf6p/>).

Absolute distance error at the level of individual trials is shown in Figure 2 (discordant interface) and Figure 3 (partially concordant interface). For the purpose of statistical analysis, individual trials within each block were averaged together and analyzed in a mixed-model ANOVA that included one within-participant factor (block) and two between-participant factors (interface and feedback condition). Absolute distance error at the level of block is shown in Figure 4. Mauchly's sphericity test was not significant ($p = .190$), confirming that the ANOVA assumption of sphericity was met. The main effect of block was significant, $F(2, 160) = 29.576$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .270$, with progressively smaller errors from Block 1 ($M = 5.998$ meters, $SE = 0.317$) to Block 2 ($M = 5.032$ meters, $SE = 0.247$) to Block 3 ($M = 4.783$ meters, $SE = 0.267$). The main effect of interface was significant, $F(1, 80) = 18.347$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .187$, with larger errors when using the discordant teleporting interface ($M = 6.404$ meters, $SE = 0.361$) than the partially concordant teleporting interface ($M = 4.138$ meters, $SE = 0.371$). The main effect of feedback condition was also significant, $F(1, 80) = 10.357$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .115$, with larger errors in the no feedback condition ($M = 5.958$ meters, $SE = 0.375$) than the feedback condition ($M = 4.584$ meters, $SE = 0.357$). The only significant interaction was between block and feedback condition,

¹A constant value of 0.4 was added to all error values prior to log transformation [10], as this minimized skewness.

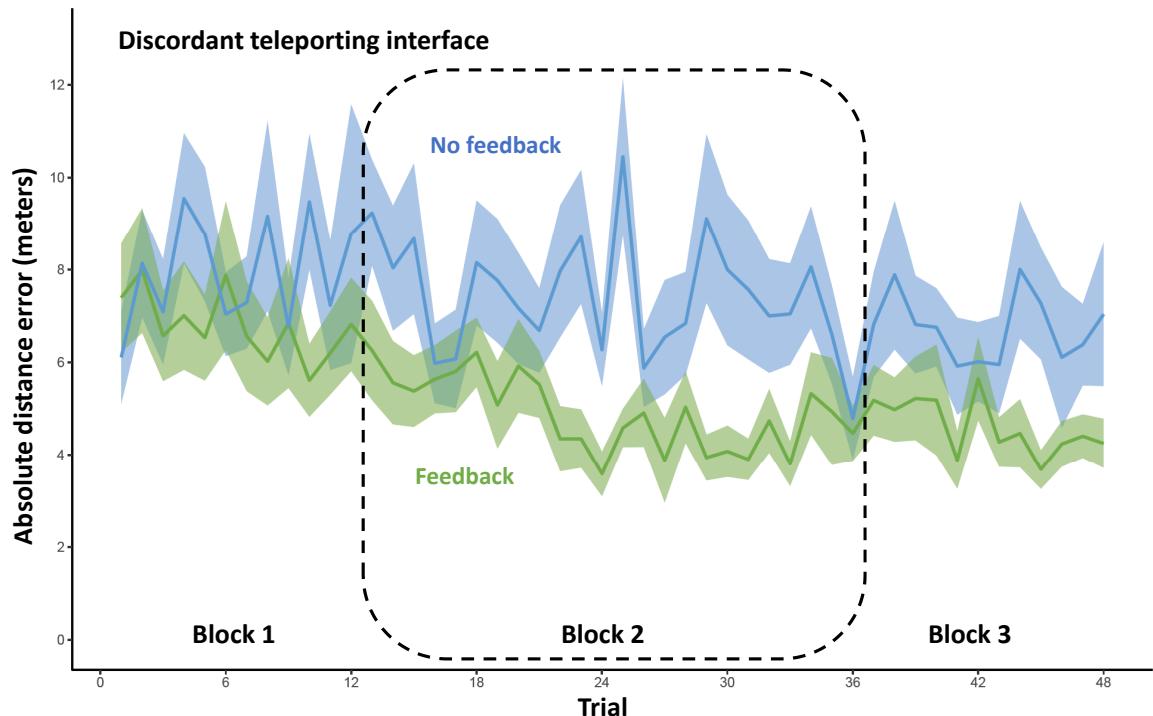


Fig. 2 Trial-level means when using the discordant teleporting interface. Error bars represent ± 1 SEM. No feedback was provided during Block 1 trials, and thus Block 1 was identical for the feedback and no feedback conditions. Feedback was provided during Block 2 trials, but only for participants in the feedback condition. No feedback was provided during Block 3 trials.

$F(2, 90) = 5.597, p = .004, \eta_p^2 = .065$. This interaction reflected the larger improvement from Block 1 to Block 3 among participants in the feedback condition compared to those in the no feedback condition, $t(82) = 2.508, p = .024, d = 0.547$. No other main effects or interactions were significant.

To more closely examine potential improvements caused by practice and practice with feedback, Block 3 errors were compared to Block 1 errors separately for the four combinations of interface and feedback condition. Block 3 errors were significantly lower than Block 1 errors when feedback was provided, and this was true for both teleporting interfaces; discordant: $t(21) = 5.756, p <.001, d = 1.227$, and partially concordant: $t(21) = 3.720, p = .001, d = 0.793$. Block 3 errors were marginally lower than Block 1 errors when feedback was not provided, and this was true for both teleporting interfaces: discordant interface: $t(20) = 1.859, p = .078, d = 0.406$, and partially concordant: $t(18) = 1.886, p = .076, d = 0.433$.

Travel time (time spent traversing the two legs of the path) and response time (time between

arrival at the end of the path and the pointing response) are presented in Figures 5 and 6, respectively. Neither measure was normally distributed so a log transformation was used to reduce skewness [28]. Analyses were conducted using the log-transformed data, but the figures present untransformed data for ease of interpretation. Equivalent figures showing log-transformed data can be found on the Open Science Framework: (<https://osf.io/hgf6p/>).

Block 3 travel time was significantly faster than Block 1 travel time for all four conditions, discordant feedback: $t(22) = 5.794, p <.001, d = 1.235$, discordant no feedback: $t(20) = 8.972, p <.001, d = 1.958$, partially concordant feedback: $t(21) = 5.357, p <.001, d = 1.142$, partially concordant no feedback: $t(18) = 7.783, p <.001, d = 1.785$.

Block 3 response time was significantly faster than Block 1 response time for three of the four conditions: discordant no feedback: $t(20) = 6.297, p <.001, d = 1.374$, partially concordant feedback:

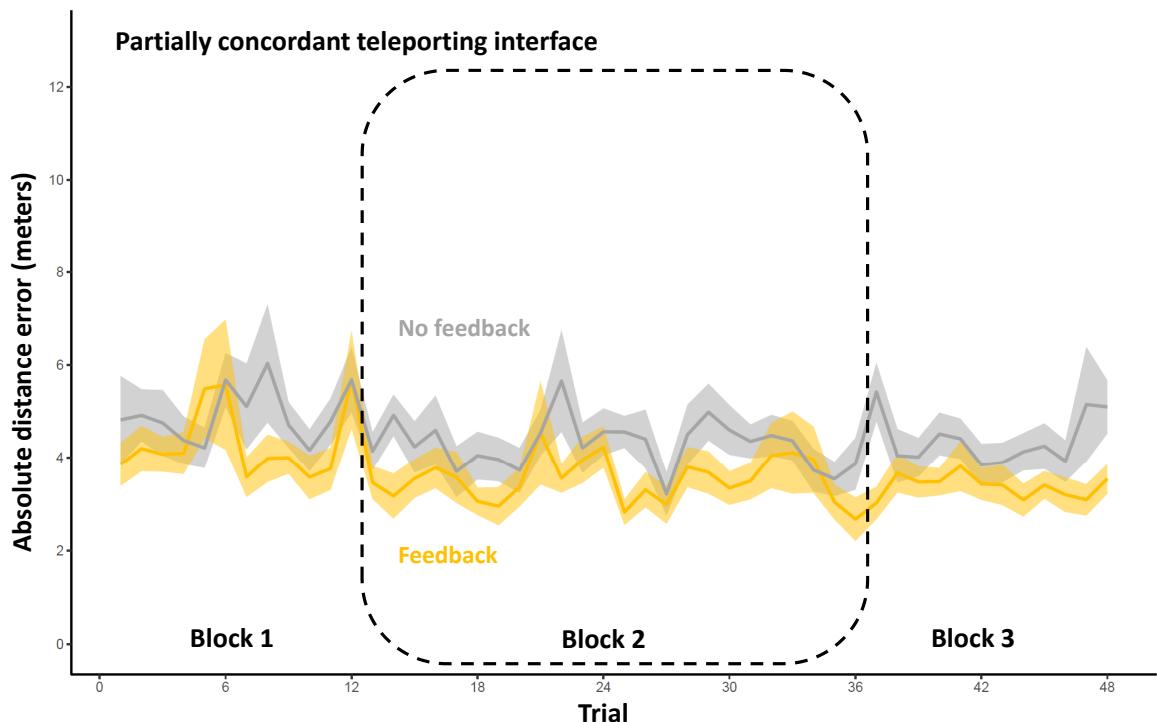


Fig. 3 Trial-level means when using the partially concordant teleporting interface. Error bars represent $+$ / $- 1$ SEM. No feedback was provided during Block 1 trials, and thus Block 1 was identical for the feedback and no feedback conditions. Feedback was provided during Block 2 trials, but only for participants in the feedback condition. No feedback was provided during Block 3 trials.

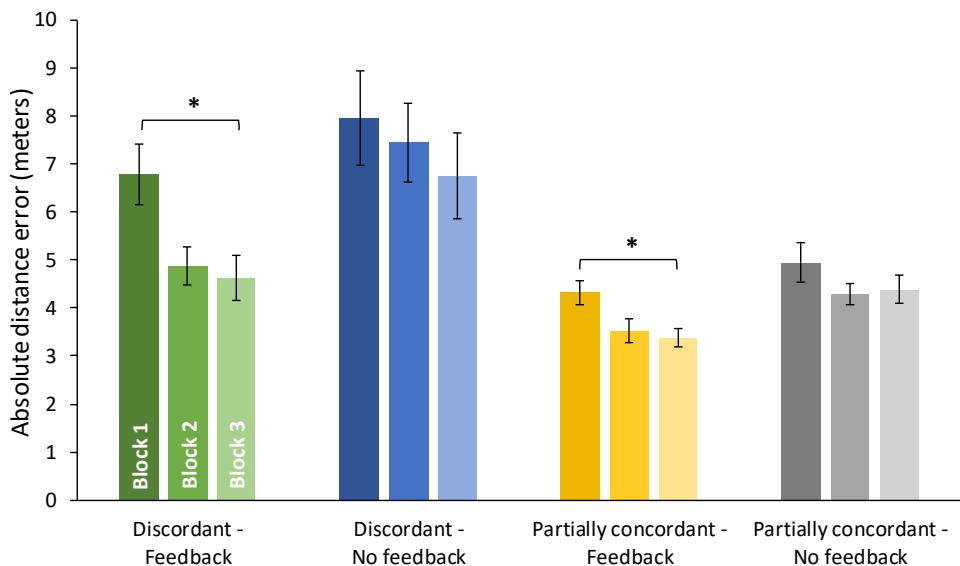


Fig. 4 Mean error as a function of block and feedback condition. Error bars represent $+$ / $- 1$ SEM. * $p < .001$

$t(21) = 3.011$, $p = .007$, $d = 0.642$, partially concordant no feedback: $t(18) = 2.843$, $p = .011$, $d = 0.652$). Block 3 response time was numerically

but not significantly lower than Block 1 response time for the discordant feedback condition: $t(21) = 1.864$, $p = .076$, $d = 0.398$.

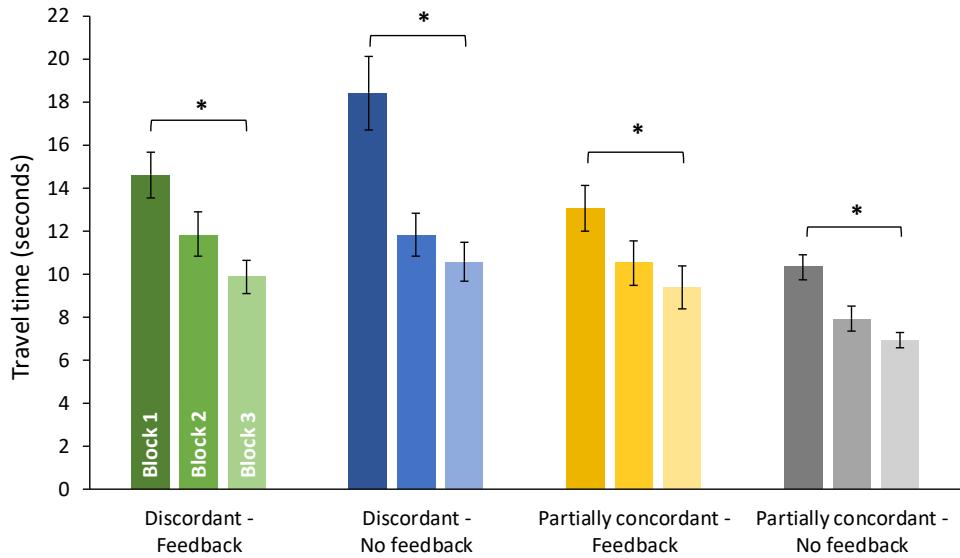


Fig. 5 Mean travel time (time spent traversing the two outbound path legs) as a function of block and feedback condition. Error bars represent $+\/- 1$ SEM. * $p < .001$

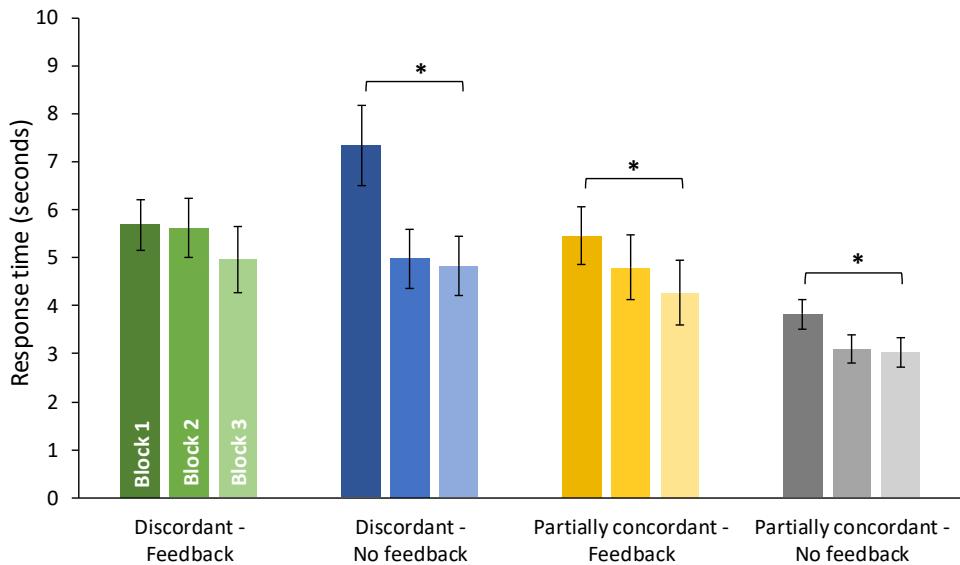


Fig. 6 Mean response time as a function of block and feedback condition. Error bars represent $+\/- 1$ SEM. * $p < .01$

The NASA Task Load Index (TLX) measured perceived workload along six dimensions. The data, presented in Table 1, were analyzed using a separate ANOVA for each dimension. Alpha was adjusted to .01 to account for the number of tests. Perceived mental workload was significantly affected by feedback condition: mental workload was higher overall in the feedback condition compared to no feedback, $F(1,78) = 7.413$, $p = .008$,

$\eta_p^2 = .087$. Perceived performance was affected by feedback condition: performance was judged as higher in the feedback condition compared to no feedback, $F(1,78) = 6.779$, $p = .011$, $\eta_p^2 = .080$. Perceived effort revealed a significant interaction between feedback condition and interface, $F(1,78) = 9.168$, $p = .003$, $\eta_p^2 = .105$. Effort was judged

similar in all conditions except partially concordant without feedback, which was judged as lower effort. No other effects were significant.

Cybersickness measures revealed an overall mild experience of cybersickness (see Table 2). For example, ratings of nausea on a 1-7 scale averaged 1.95 ($SD = 1.36$). There were no notable differences in cybersickness across conditions.

Free response data on strategies used to perform the task were coded for whether they referred to reliance on environmental cues (e.g., "I tried to remember where the green post was by using the props in the background") and whether they referred to reliance on path-based cues (e.g., "I tried to trace my steps from the directions of the teleports and looked behind to find out where the green post was"). Environment strategies were reported more frequently ($n = 51$) than were path strategies ($n = 23$), but neither varied notably across feedback condition or interface.

5 Discussion

5.1 Summary of main findings and relationship to prior research

This experiment evaluated the effects of practice and feedback on triangle completion performance when using two teleporting interfaces: partially concordant teleporting and discordant teleporting. Task errors were higher when using the discordant teleporting interface, which lacked body rotations, and this finding is consistent with the hypothesis and with past research [7, 18, 19]. Practice alone led to a marginal improvement in task error for both interfaces. Practice with feedback led to significant improvement in error for both interfaces, consistent with the hypothesis. Effect sizes indicate that the effect of feedback is large, and that the effect of practice is small to medium. Improvement in travel time and response time occurred as a result of practice, whether or not feedback was provided. These findings indicate that tasks requiring precise navigation can benefit from training with a relatively small number of trials, even among experienced VR users.

Performing triangle completion by teleporting is a complex task with many sub-tasks, any of which could have improved through practice and feedback. Improvements observed in the current study could have occurred in the perception

of body movement, similar to studies testing movement training [25] and movement expertise [1, 31, 32]. However, this cannot fully explain the observed improvements, since the discordant teleporting interface involved no body movement but also showed improvement with practice and feedback. Improvements could also have occurred at the level of the interface. For example, control of the teleporting interface (e.g., positioning the thumb on the trackpad for the discordant interface) could have improved with practice and with feedback. Improvements in encoding the outbound path could also have occurred as a result of practice and feedback. For example, participants could have learned to focus more on the surrounding landmarks. Additionally, participants could have developed and refined strategies that facilitated task performance. However, subjective reports of the strategies used by participants did not differ between conditions, so if feedback caused a shift in strategy it was not evident in the self-report data.

Counter to the prediction, perceived workload was similar for the two interfaces, despite the fact that the discordant teleporting interface led to larger errors than the partially concordant interface. Even self-assessed performance was unaffected by interface, indicating that participants lacked awareness of their performance. Instead, perceived workload was only affected by the feedback condition, with higher ratings of mental workload and performance in the feedback condition compared to no feedback. This indicates that participants were sensitive to the increased mental effort required to process the feedback.

Participants were HMD owners and most (65%) used their HMD at least weekly. The teleporting interface is widespread, and frequent VR users likely have considerable experience with teleporting (although experience with these specific interfaces was not measured). It is therefore possible that VR novices, who lack experience with VR and with teleporting interfaces, would benefit even more from practice and feedback than the experienced VR users tested in the current study. On the other hand, a study measuring triangle completion performance when teleporting found that HMD owners perform with similar accuracy to VR novices [19], perhaps because the typical usage of the teleporting interface is for tasks that require

Table 1 Means and standard deviations of responses to the NASA TLX survey assessing perceived workload. Each item was rated on a 21-point scale.

Condition	Mental	Physical	Temporal	Performance	Effort	Frustration
Discordant - Feedback	10.77 (5.45)	5.77 (5.88)	4.41 (3.40)	9.73 (4.93)	12.27 (5.32)	9.14 (6.77)
Discordant - No feedback	9.57 (5.98)	6.38 (5.74)	4.90 (4.52)	8.43 (5.07)	13.14 (5.06)	10.10 (6.62)
Partially concordant - Feedback	11.25 (5.68)	4.40 (5.60)	6.30 (5.33)	12.05 (4.66)	13.85 (3.39)	8.30 (5.94)
Partially concordant - No feedback	5.58 (5.71)	5.26 (5.33)	4.89 (5.32)	7.58 (5.38)	8.16 (5.51)	4.63 (5.95)
Average	9.38 (5.71)	5.48 (5.64)	5.11 (4.64)	9.46 (5.01)	11.93 (4.82)	8.13 (6.32)

Table 2 Means and standard deviations of responses to survey questions about cybersickness. Each item was rated on a 7-point scale.

Condition	Nausea	Disorientation	Dizziness	Instability	Headache	Eyestrain
Discordant - Feedback	1.59 (1.14)	2.00 (1.35)	1.50 (1.10)	1.27 (0.55)	1.41 (0.80)	1.64 (0.85)
Discordant - No feedback	2.76 (2.14)	3.52 (1.72)	2.48 (1.78)	1.76 (1.14)	1.81 (1.17)	1.86 (1.39)
Partially concordant - Feedback	1.75 (1.16)	2.30 (1.45)	1.55 (1.05)	1.40 (0.88)	1.20 (0.62)	1.35 (0.75)
Partially concordant - No feedback	1.68 (1.00)	1.79 (0.98)	1.53 (0.96)	1.63 (1.46)	1.68 (1.20)	1.68 (1.11)
Average	1.95 (1.36)	2.41 (1.37)	1.77 (1.22)	1.51 (1.01)	1.52 (0.95)	1.63 (1.05)

less precise spatial updating than does the triangle completion task, so this remains a question for future empirical study.

The results align somewhat with past research on the effects of practice, feedback, and spatial experience on navigation. In one study, practice rotating the body by a specific amount led to improved accuracy for the practiced rotation angle and another angle, and practice with feedback led to larger improvement [25]. This result appears similar to the current findings, although the benefit of practice without feedback on task error in the current study was small and not statistically significant.

Although task performance significantly improved through a combination of feedback and practice, substantial errors still remained after 48 trials (24 with feedback). It is worth considering whether other conditions would lead to further and/or faster improvement in task performance. One possible factor is participant motivation. Although motivation was not directly measured in the current study, it is possible participants were not highly motivated. A future study could pose a task with more dramatic or motivating consequences. Another possibility is that the feedback could be changed to be more useful to the participant. For example, a future study could augment the current form of feedback with a break down of contributing errors (e.g., "You answered here, which was incorrect. It appears you have overestimated the distance traveled. You might want to pay closer attention to landmarks."). It could also be that performance would improve further with

additional feedback and practice, possibly spread across multiple days to enhance consolidation of learning. Additionally, the combination of the virtual environment and the teleporting interface may simply not yield enough perceptual cues for a person to perfect this task, even with feedback and practice. It is also possible that individuals differ in their capacity to improve on this task, perhaps due to differences in their spatial representations or their mental models of the interface. Future studies exploring the effects of feedback on navigational tasks should consider exploring each of these factors: motivation, the type of feedback, amount of practice, availability of self-motion and environmental cues, and individual differences in spatial learning.

5.2 Limitations

One limitation of this research is that the participant sample included very few women. Women represented approximately 12% of the participant sample in this study, which is less than expected based on reports that women make up 42% [27] and 30% [17] of VR headset owners. This suggests that remote VR studies may widen the existing gender gap in VR research studies [29] unless substantial efforts are made to recruit women.

Another limitation of this study is that the findings might not generalize beyond the interfaces, task, path size, and VE used. It will be important to determine whether improvement with the triangle completion task corresponds to

improvement in other spatial tasks, such as forming a cognitive map. Likewise, it will be important to determine whether improvements that occurred in the warehouse VE generalize to other VEs that vary in size, complexity, and availability of landmarks. In other words, do the improvements that occurred with practice and feedback generalize to other tasks and other VEs? For feedback to be a useful tool it should ideally generalize beyond the training scenario.

6 Conclusions

Performance-based feedback when using two teleporting interfaces significantly improved navigation performance. Improvement through feedback was larger than that based on practice alone. Furthermore, improvement through feedback occurred for two different interfaces varying in the extent to which they include body movement.

Funding. This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant Number CHS-1816029.

Data availability. The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are available on the Open Science Framework: <https://osf.io/hgf6p/>.

Supplementary information. Supplemental figures are available on the Open Science Framework: <https://osf.io/hgf6p/>.

Declarations

Conflict of interest. The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

Ethical approval. Ethical approval for this research was obtained from the Iowa State University institutional review board, and informed consent was given by all participants.

References

- [1] Barhorst-Cates EM, Stefanucci JK, Creem-Regehr SH (2020) A comparison of virtual locomotion methods in movement experts and non-experts: testing the contributions of body-based and visual translation for spatial updating. *Experimental Brain Research* 238(9):1911–1923. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00221-020-05851-6>
- [2] Bhandari J, MacNeilage P, Folmer E (2018) Teleportation without spatial disorientation using optical flow cues. In: Proc. Graphics Interface. Canadian Human-Computer Communications Society, Mississauga, Ontario, pp 162–167, <https://doi.org/10.20380/GI2018.22>
- [3] Bowman DA, Koller D, Hodges LF (1997) Travel in immersive virtual environments: An evaluation of viewpoint motion control techniques. In: Proc. Virtual Reality Annual International Symposium. IEEE Computer Society, Washington, D.C., pp 45–52, <https://doi.org/10.1109/VRAIS.1997.583043>
- [4] Bozgeyikli E, Raji A, Katkoori S, et al (2016) Point and teleport locomotion technique for virtual reality. In: Proc. Annual Symposium on Computer-Human Interaction in Play. ACM, New York, pp 205–216, <https://doi.org/10.1145/2967934.2968105>
- [5] Chance SS, Gaunet F, Beall AC, et al (1998) Locomotion mode affects the updating of objects encountered during travel: The contribution of vestibular and proprioceptive inputs to path integration. *Presence: Teleoperators and Virtual Environments* 7:168–178. <https://doi.org/10.1162/105474698565659>
- [6] Chen X, McNamara TP, Kelly JW, et al (2017) Cue combination in human spatial navigation. *Cognitive Psychology* 95:105–144. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogpsych.2017.04.003>
- [7] Cherep LA, Lim AF, Kelly JW, et al (2020) Spatial cognitive implications of teleporting through virtual environments. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied* 26(3):480–492. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xap0000263>
- [8] Cherep LA, Kelly JW, Miller AJ, et al (2021) Individual differences in teleporting through virtual environments. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied* <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/b6cyd>

- [9] Christou CG, Aristidou P (2017) Steering versus teleport locomotion for head mounted displays. In: Paolis LD, Bourdot P, Mongelli A (eds) *Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, and Computer Graphics, Lecture Notes in Computer Science*, vol 10325. Springer-Verlag, London, p 431–446, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-60928-7_37
- [10] Ekwuru JP, Veugelers PJ (2018) The overlooked importance of constants added in log transformation of independent variables with zero values: A proposed approach for determining an optimal constant. *Statistics in Bio-pharmaceutical Research* 10(1):26–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19466315.2017.1369900>
- [11] Freitag S, Rausch D, Kuhlen T (2014) Reorientation in virtual environments using interactive portals. In: 2014 IEEE Symposium on 3D User Interfaces (3DUI), pp 119–122, <https://doi.org/10.1109/3DUI.2014.6798852>
- [12] Habgood MPJ, Moore D, Wilson D, et al (2018) Rapid, continuous movement between nodes as an accessible virtual reality locomotion technique. In: 2018 IEEE Conference on Virtual Reality and 3D User Interfaces (VR), pp 371–378, <https://doi.org/10.1109/VR.2018.8446130>
- [13] Hart SG, Staveland LE (1988) Development of nasa-tlx (task load index): Results of empirical and theoretical research. In: Hancock PA, Meshkati N (eds) *Human Mental Workload, Advances in Psychology*, vol 52. North-Holland, p 139–183, [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0166-4115\(08\)62386-9](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0166-4115(08)62386-9)
- [14] Kearns MJ, Warren WH, Duchon AP, et al (2002) Path integration from optic flow and body senses in a homing task. *Perception* 31:349–374. <https://doi.org/10.1068/p3311>
- [15] Kelly JW, Gilbert SB (2021) The effectiveness of locomotion interfaces depends on self-motion cues, environmental cues, and the individual. In: 2021 IEEE Conference on Virtual Reality and 3D User Interfaces Abstracts and Workshops (VRW), pp 391–392, <https://doi.org/10.1109/VRW52623.2021.00082>
- [16] Kelly JW, Ostrander AG, Lim AF, et al (2020) Teleporting through virtual environments: Effects of path scale and environment scale on spatial updating. *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics* 26(5):1841–1850. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TVCG.2020.2973051>
- [17] Kelly JW, Cherep LA, Lim AF, et al (2021) Who are virtual reality headset owners? a survey and comparison of headset owners and non-owners. In: 2021 IEEE Virtual Reality and 3D User Interfaces (VR), pp 687–694, <https://doi.org/10.1109/VR50410.2021.00095>
- [18] Kelly JW, Doty TA, Cherep LA, et al (2022) Boundaries reduce disorientation in virtual reality. *Frontiers in Virtual Reality* 3. <https://doi.org/10.3389/frvir.2022.882526>
- [19] Kelly JW, Hoover M, Doty TA, et al (2022) Remote research on locomotion interfaces for virtual reality: Replication of a lab-based study on teleporting interfaces. *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics* pp 1–1. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TVCG.2022.3150475>
- [20] Klatzky RL, Loomis JM, Beall AC, et al (1998) Spatial updating of self-position and orientation during real, imagined, and virtual locomotion. *Psychological Science* 9:293–298. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9280.00058>
- [21] Kourtesis P, Collina S, Doumas LAA, et al (2019) Validation of the virtual reality neuroscience questionnaire: Maximum duration of immersive virtual reality sessions without the presence of pertinent adverse symptomatology. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2019.00417>
- [22] Langbehn E, Lubos P, Steincke F (2018) Evaluation of locomotion techniques for roomscale vr: Joystick, teleportation, and redirected walking. In: Proc. Virtual Reality International Conference. ACM, New York, pp 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.1145/3234253.3234291>

- [23] Lim AF, Kelly JW, Sepich NC, et al (2020) Rotational self-motion cues improve spatial learning when teleporting in virtual environments. In: Symposium on Spatial User Interaction. ACM, New York, SUI '20, <https://doi.org/10.1145/3385959.3418443>
- [24] Liu J, Parekh H, Al-Zayer M, et al (2018) Increasing walking in vr using redirected teleportation. In: Proceedings of the 31st Annual ACM Symposium on User Interface Software and Technology. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, UIST '18, p 521–529, <https://doi.org/10.1145/3242587.3242601>
- [25] Mackrouss I, Simoneau M (2015) Improving spatial updating accuracy in absence of external feedback. *Neuroscience* 300:155–162. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroscience.2015.05.024>
- [26] Moghadam KR, Banigan C, Ragan ED (2018) Scene transitions and teleportation in virtual reality and the implications for spatial awareness and sickness. *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics* <https://doi.org/10.1109/TVCG.2018.2884468>
- [27] Nielsen (2018) Nielsen games 360 u.s. report
- [28] Osborne JW, Costello A (2008) Best Practices in Exploratory Factor Analysis. Best Practices in Quantitative Methods p 596. URL http://books.google.com/books?id=M5_FCgCuwFgC&printsec=frontcover&dq=intitle:best+practices+in+exploratory+factor+analysis&hl=&cd=1&source=gbs_apipapers2://publication/uuid/9F9EB473-6C2B-4E47-83A3-FD9BF64B15BC
- [29] Peck TC, Sockol LE, Hancock SM (2020) Mind the gap: The underrepresentation of female participants and authors in virtual reality research. *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics* 26(5):1945–1954. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TVCG.2020.2973498>
- [30] Philbeck JW, Sargent J (2013) Perception of spatial relations during self-motion. In: Waller D, Nadel L (eds) *Handbook of spatial cognition*. American Psychological Association, Washington, DC, p 99–115, <https://doi.org/10.1037/13936-006>
- [31] Photiou M, Galati A, Avraamides M (2021) Spatial updating and domain expertise: the case of dancers. In: *Lecture Notes in Artificial Intelligence: Spatial Cognition*. Springer, Heidelberg
- [32] Popov AG, Paquet N, Lajoie Y (2013) Influence of gymnastic background on triangle completion performance in single and dual-task conditions. *The Open Sports Sciences Journal* 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.2174/1875399X01306010015>
- [33] Riecke BE, Veen HAHCv, Bülthoff HH (2002) Visual Homing Is Possible Without Landmarks: A Path Integration Study in Virtual Reality. *Presence: Teleoperators and Virtual Environments* 11(5):443–473. <https://doi.org/10.1162/105474602320935810>
- [34] Sayyad E, Sra M, Höllerer T (2020) Walking and teleportation in wide-area virtual reality experiences. In: 2020 IEEE International Symposium on Mixed and Augmented Reality (ISMAR), pp 608–617, <https://doi.org/10.1109/ISMAR50242.2020.00088>
- [35] Sjolund LA, Kelly JW, McNamara TP (2018) Optimal combination of environmental cues and path integration during navigation. *Memory and Cognition* 46(1):89–99. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13421-017-0747-7>
- [36] Slater M (2003) A note on presence terminology. *Presence Connect* 3(3):1–5
- [37] Wang RF (2016) Building a cognitive map by assembling multiple path integration systems. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review* 23(3):692–702. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13423-015-0952-y>
- [38] Weissker T, Kunert A, Fröhlich B, et al (2018) Spatial updating and simulator sickness during steering and jumping in immersive virtual environments. In: *Proc. IEEE Conference on Virtual Reality and 3d*

User Interfaces (VR). IEEE, Washington, D.C., pp 97–104, <https://doi.org/10.1109/VR.2018.8446620>

- [39] Wiener JM, Mallot HA (2006) Path complexity does not impair visual path integration. *Spatial Cognition & Computation* 6(4):333–346. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15427633scc0604_3
- [40] Wraga M, Creem-Regehr SH, Proffitt DR (2004) Spatial updating of virtual displays. *Memory & Cognition* 32(3):399–415. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03195834>