

# ONLINE, OPEN AND FLEXIBLE HIGHER EDUCATION

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An  
Ultimate  
question

Open  
University  
in Milton  
Keynes

European  
Association of  
Distance Teaching  
Universities  
(EADTU)  
<https://eadtu.eu/>



# Open Education

<http://www.open.ac.uk/>



Mission  
of OU

Resources



# Mission of OU



We promote educational opportunity and social justice by providing high-quality university education to all who wish to realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential.

Through academic research, pedagogic innovation and collaborative partnership we seek to be a world leader in the design, content and delivery of supported open learning.

There is no typical OU student. People of all ages and backgrounds study with us, for all sorts of reasons – to update their skills, get a qualification, boost their career, change direction, prove themselves, keep mentally active. The OU is open to them all.

The Open University's Former Vice-Chancellor, Martin Bean

The top screenshot shows the website for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, specifically the School of Psychology. It includes a navigation menu with 'Overview', 'People', 'Study', 'Research', 'Collaborators', 'News', and 'Events'. The main heading is 'School of Psychology' with a graphic of two heads filled with colorful gears. Below the graphic, there is a paragraph of text describing the school's mission and a list of members.

The bottom screenshot shows the website for the Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies, specifically the School of Languages and Applied Linguistics. It includes a navigation menu with 'Overview', 'People', 'Research', 'Study', 'Collaborators', 'News', and 'Events'. The main heading is 'School of Languages and Applied Linguistics' with a photo of four people talking. Below the photo, there is a paragraph of text describing the school's mission and a list of members.

# Resources

The OU teaches through its own unique method of distance learning, called ‘supported open learning’, which is:

Flexible – students work where and when they choose to fit in with jobs, families and other commitments

All-inclusive – students get all the high quality materials they need to study

Supportive – personal tutors provide academic expertise, guidance and feedback and run group tutorials; and specialist advisers are on hand to help with other aspects of OU study

Social – students get together at tutorials, day schools and informal study groups; and through online conferencing, study networks and course forums.





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THE ONLINE,  
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FLEXIBLE HIGH...

Labster is a  
groundbreaking platform  
that gives students  
worldwide t...

Social  
science  
virtual labs

A Conversation  
with Nicholas  
A. Christakis  
htt...

THE ONLINE, OPEN AND FLEXIBLE HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE  
HIGHER EDUCATION FOR THE FUTURE;  
'ACCELERATING AND STRENGTHENING INNOVATION'  
25-27 OCTOBER 2017  
HOSTED BY THE OPEN UNIVERSITY IN MILTON KEYNES (UK)

THEMES

1. Strategies for the future of continuous professional development

- National and institutional policies in the changing pedagogical landscape
- Flexible continuing education (incl.CPD) and new types of courses (short learning programmes) to accommodate 25+ students
- Modular education, short learning programmes
- University-business collaboration

2. Open education and widening participation

- **OERs and MOOCs**

- Equal opportunities
- Adaptive learning

3. Research and innovation for new modes of teaching and learning

- **Online and blended course design**

- Learning analytics and learning technologies
- Assessment

- **Virtual laboratories**

4. HE for a diverse future

- Social inclusion
- Higher education for minorities (refugees, migrants)
- Multi-cultural education

5. Engaging students for learning at all stages of life

- Retention issues

6. Policies for change in Higher Education

- Empowering universities for excellence in higher education, improving the quality of higher education
- The modernisation agenda for European universities: education for innovation and entrepreneurship/intrapreneurship









# A virtual lab

What is Virtual Lab

1. A web site or software for interactive learning based on simulation of real phenomena. It allows students to explore a topic by comparing and contrasting different scenarios, to pause and restart application for reflection and note taking, to get practical experimentation experience over the Internet.

Enhanced vs. Traditional Approach for a Science Course  
2. A lab facility that is on virtual space, to be accessed through the internet.

3. An experiment is set up in the remote laboratory for users to access through the Internet at any time and any place. Comparing with traditional laboratory, virtual laboratory is particularly useful when some experiment involves equipment that may cause harmful effects to human beings. Another meaning of virtual lab is to implement the laboratory by means of software simulation.

<https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/virtual-lab/31699>



# Virtual laboratories

Virtual reality is no longer part of some distant future, and it's not just for gaming and entertainment anymore.

- Michael Bodekaer wants to use it to make quality education more accessible. In this refreshing talk, he demos an idea that could revolutionize the way we teach science in schools. [https://www.ted.com/talks/michael\\_bodekaer\\_this\\_virtual\\_lab\\_will\\_revolutionize\\_science\\_class#t-476117](https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_bodekaer_this_virtual_lab_will_revolutionize_science_class#t-476117)



Michael Bodekaer is a serial entrepreneur with a passion for building innovative technology companies that have the potential to change the world.

# MOOK

Psycholinguistics (Sant Petersburg)/Chernigovskaia et al  
<https://www.coursera.org/learn/psikholingvistika>



**Labster** is a groundbreaking platform that gives students worldwide the opportunity to learn life sciences through gamified education in immersive 3D virtual worlds and laboratories. With the ability to significantly enhance student's motivation, these new and ever-evolving teaching tools are bringing a revolution to world class learning.

<https://www.labster.com/about/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oirUMkieak>



Experimental  
design



# Experimental design

## About This Simulation

In this simulation, you will learn how to design a scientific experiment. As a pharmaceutical detective, you have the chance to perform experiments with human volunteers, animals, and living human cells. Make sure that you choose the correct experimental model to design a scientifically sound experiment for testing the effect of the suspicious drug.

## The scientific method

Humans have always strived to explain natural phenomena. In the first mission of the experimental design simulation, you will learn how to use the scientific method to investigate phenomena, acquire new knowledge, or correct and integrate existing knowledge. Every tool you need to use is available in this virtual lab.

## Design an experiment and test your hypothesis

In your next mission you have the freedom to design your own experiment from scratch while examining biopsies under a microscope. Define your scientific question and choose the right model to test your hypothesis. And don't be afraid to make mistakes – in this virtual simulation you can repeat the experiment as many times as you want.



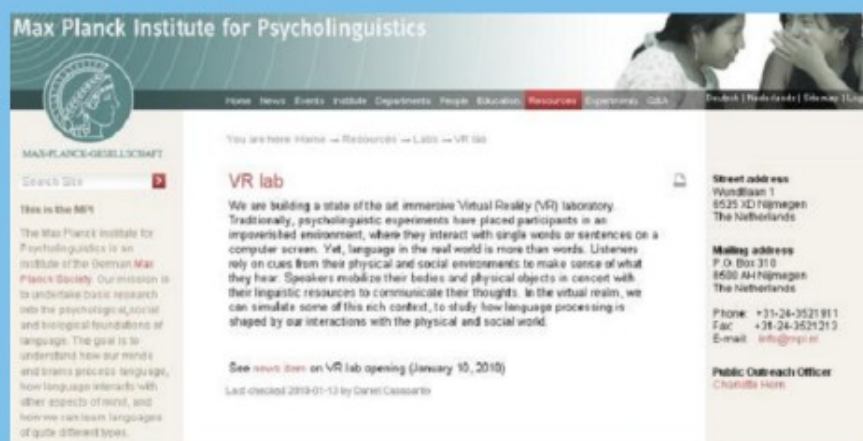


# Social science virtual labs

MPI opens virtual reality lab

From now on, researchers at the MPI for Psycholinguistics can study language in more complex settings, that is, in a virtual reality world. On January 11, 2010, the institute gathered for the official opening of the first virtual reality lab in the world of psycholinguistics. MPI's Technical Group, especially Gerd Klaas and Albert Russel, spent over a year developing the groundbreaking experimental facility that has cost almost half a million euros.

<http://www.mpi.nl/resources/labs/vr-lab>



The screenshot shows the website for the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics. The header includes the institute's name and a navigation menu with links for Home, News, Events, Public, Departments, People, Education, Resources, Experiments, and GSA. A search bar is located on the left. The main content area features a section titled "VR lab" with a sub-header "You are here: Home → Resources → Lab → VR lab". The text describes the lab as a state-of-the-art immersive VR laboratory where participants interact with words or sentences on a computer screen. It mentions that the lab was opened on January 10, 2010, and was checked by Carol Cassarini. Contact information for the Public Outreach Officer, Charlotte Horn, is provided at the bottom right of the page.



The screenshot shows the website for the Natural Language Processing Lab at IIT-H. The header includes the lab's name and the IIT-H logo. The main content area features a section titled "Welcome to Natural Language Processing lab!" with a sub-header "Virtual lab: Home → Natural Language Processing Lab". Below this is a navigation menu with links for INTRODUCTION, LIST OF EXPERIMENTS, TARGET AUDIENCE, and REFERENCES. The "Introduction" section describes the lab as an interdisciplinary field dealing with human-computer interaction and computer-aided processing of human language. It states that the objective of the lab is to introduce students with the basics of NLP, which will empower them for developing advanced NLP tools and solving practical problems in the field. The experiments are arranged in a logical sequence to inculcate a new concept at every step, starting from very basic ones to advanced ones.

Natural Language is the language written or spoken by humans in their daily life. Natural Language Processing is an interdisciplinary field dealing with human-computer interaction and computer aided processing of human language. It combines major concepts from computer science, artificial intelligence, and linguistics. The objective of Natural Language Processing lab is to introduce the students with the basics of NLP which will empower them for developing advanced NLP tools and solving practical problems in the field. The experiments in this lab are arranged in a logical sequence to inculcate a new concept at every step, starting from very basic ones to advanced ones. <http://cse24-iitih.virtual-labs.ac.in/>



## A Conversation with Nicholas A. Christakis

[https://www.edge.org/conversation/nicholas\\_a\\_christakis-a-new-kind-of-social-science-for-the-21st-century](https://www.edge.org/conversation/nicholas_a_christakis-a-new-kind-of-social-science-for-the-21st-century)

### A NEW KIND OF SOCIAL SCIENCE FOR THE 21st CENTURY

These three things—a biological hurricane, computational social science, and the rediscovery of experimentation—are going to change the social sciences in the 21st century. With that change will come, in my judgment, a variety of discoveries and opportunities that offer tremendous prospect for improving the human condition.

It's one thing to say that the way in which we study our object of inquiry, namely humans, is undergoing profound change, as I think it is. The social sciences are indeed changing. But the next question is: is the object of inquiry also undergoing profound change? It's not just how we study it that's changing, which it is. The question is: is the thing itself, our humanity, also changing?



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## An Ultimate question

Should we give a thought to virtual lab simulations both in teaching and research?



THANK  
YOU



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