Steven R. Van Hook, PhD

Virtual World Education Consortium

October 27, 2023 / 1:00 PM PT SLT

University Response to Virtual World Learning

Abstract & Bio

Abstract: This presentation provides a first-hand take on academia's response to virtual world learning over the last 15 years. Steve Van Hook brings more than 20 years' experience as an educator, author, innovator, and course designer. He will cover university response to over a decade of Virtual World educational possibilities, citing administrator, instructor and student concerns including:
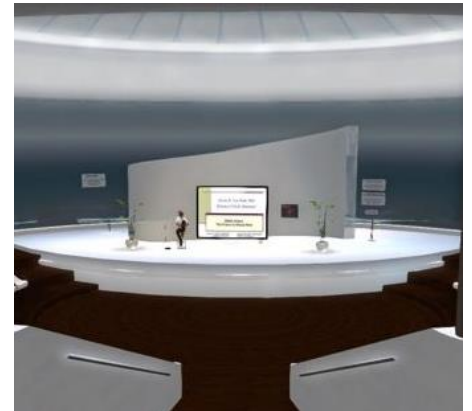
- Appeals and protests of Virtual World learning
- Cost-effective program development
- Best VW teaching tactics and practices
- Benefits and necessities of immersive experiential learning
- Field-trip invitation to a Virtual World campus

Bio: Dr. Steven R. Van Hook has designed and taught communication and culture classes for universities in the USA and abroad for 25 years, including one of the first hybrid virtual courses for UCSB in 2000. He is President of Educare Research, a nonprofit program advancing international education and technologies. He's been a newspaper columnist, radio reporter, TV news anchor, and podcast host. He was a television producer and bureau chief in Moscow, USSR from 1989-91; and for three years directed public education media programs in Ukraine through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). He served as a trainer and officer for organizations including VISTA, Head Start, and the US Coast Guard. He has a PhD specializing in transcultural learning, and is published in scholarly journals including UNESCO's *Prospects*, and by SAGE. He has presented on virtual world education to administrators and groups at UCLA, UCSB, VWBPE, VWEC, The Science Circle, and elsewhere. Research website: http://wwmr.us

Virtual World Tours in Zoom

> **Low Lag**
> **Audio & Video Fidelity**
> **Single & Group Tours**
> **Zoom Familiarity**
> **No VW Curve**

Innovative Educators

A Tour Of The Virtual World:
How To Engage Students &
Create A Sense Of Belonging Online

DATE
Wednesday, January 25

TIME
3:00-4:00pm (Eastern)

Innovative Educators
Online Services For Orientation, Support & Training

- 75+ years in Higher Ed
- 4,262 College Clients
- 600,000+ Educators Trained

Dr. Steven R. Van Hook has developed and taught mixed-format courses in cross-cultural communications and global affairs for the University of California and other universities in the United States and abroad. He was a spotlight speaker for the 2022 Conference of Virtual Worlds Best Practices in Education and has designed VW learning builds for over a decade, with a doctorate specializing in international transcultural educational tactics and technologies.

Overview

Educators can be COVID-challenged to keep students and funds flowing, while promoting healthy and enriching academic options. Virtual World learning may provide immersive hands-on experience for engaging students and offering a sense of place and belonging, so important to student success and retention in online education.

This easy virtual VW visit through Zoom covers: evolution of virtual world learning, academic necessities for learning alternatives, socioeconomic drivers and gains, fulfilling student desires for immersive experience, benefits of experiential learning, providing dimensional sense of space, sample in-world learning centers, forming partnerships between academia and emerging technology, effective gamification of learning, bridging the digital divide, and a self-guided field trip to a Virtual World campus.

Objectives

- Learn about the evolution of Virtual World (VW) learning
- Examine best practices in VW education
- Learn about fulfilling student desires and demands for more immersive online learning experiences
- Discover how to provide a sense of 'place' in virtual world settings
- Critique samples of VW learning centers
- Explore new models of student engagement and interactive learning
- Discover the future trends and the holistic vision of educational possibilities
- Use a free field trip invitation to a virtual world campus

Link

Courses Designed / Developed / Taught
BA & MA On-Ground, Online, & Mixed

Steven R. Van Hook, PhD
http://wwmr.us
steven@wwmr.us

UCLA / UCSB Extension

- EmpowerEd Course Designer
- Writing for Marketing & Advertising
- Working with the Media
- Marketing Principles & Practice
- Writing for Public Relations
- Integrated Marketing Communications
- Global Communication Management
- Fundamentals of Global Management & Marketing
- Principles of Business Administration & Management
- Global Economies & Issues
- Speaking Skills for the Global Marketplace
- Communications Skills for the Business Professional
- Fundamentals of International Advertising

California Lutheran University

- Principles of Marketing
- International Marketing
- Cross-Cultural Marketing Communications
- Global Issues

National University

- Campaign & Program Management
- Campaign & Program Evaluation
- Legal & Ethical Issues
- Integrated Marketing Communications
- Strategic Writing
- Mediated Messaging
- Communication Technologies
- Persuasion
- Art of Public Speaking

UCLA Extension

National University

California Lutheran UNIVERSITY

UC SANTA BARBARA EXTENSION

Link

Educational Platforms & Programs

- Brightspace
- Blackboard
- Canvas
- Articulate 360
- Second Life
- EmpowerEd
- SMF
- Moodle
- Sakai
- iUniversity

- eCollege
- Captivate
- WordPress
- Desire2Learn
- YouTube
- iTunes
- Collaborate
- Adobe Connect
- GoToMeeting
- Skype

- Zoom
- FirstClass
- OpenCourseware
- Comcourse
- Sansar
- OpenSim

VW Commentary & Review

- University President / Officers
- SVP of Innovation
- Program Directors
- Course Designers
- Professors
- Domestic & International Students
- Educator Training Programs
- VW Education Groups

UCLA Custom Programs
Korean Students / Kerckhoff Hall

UCSB International Students

Recent Reactions to VW Ed

- "Don't you need a headset?"
  – SVP Innovation

- "Do I *have* to wear the goggles?"
  – Professor

- "Our students can't afford a headset."
  – Nonprofit Education Program CEO

- "I already play in a 3D world – it's called *life*."
  – Student / Gamer

BEST OVERALL	BEST PC VR HEADSET	MOST AFFORDABLE
1. PSVR 2	2. HTC Vive Pro 2	3. Meta Quest 2

BEST PREMIUM	BEST FOR MID-RANGE PCS	BEST LOOKING
4. Valve Index	5. HTC Vive Cosmos Elite	6. HP Reverb G2
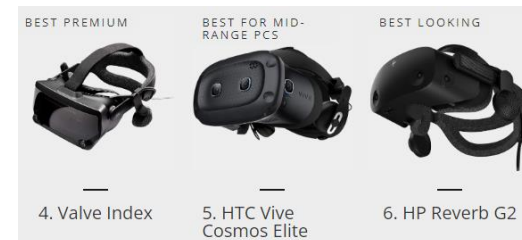
Top 3: PSVR 2, Apple Vision Pro, and Meta Quest 3

$300 - $600 range
$3,500 for Apple Vision Pro

Best VR Headsets

The Metaverse Hype Cycle

Source: Avi Bar-Zeev / RealityPrime
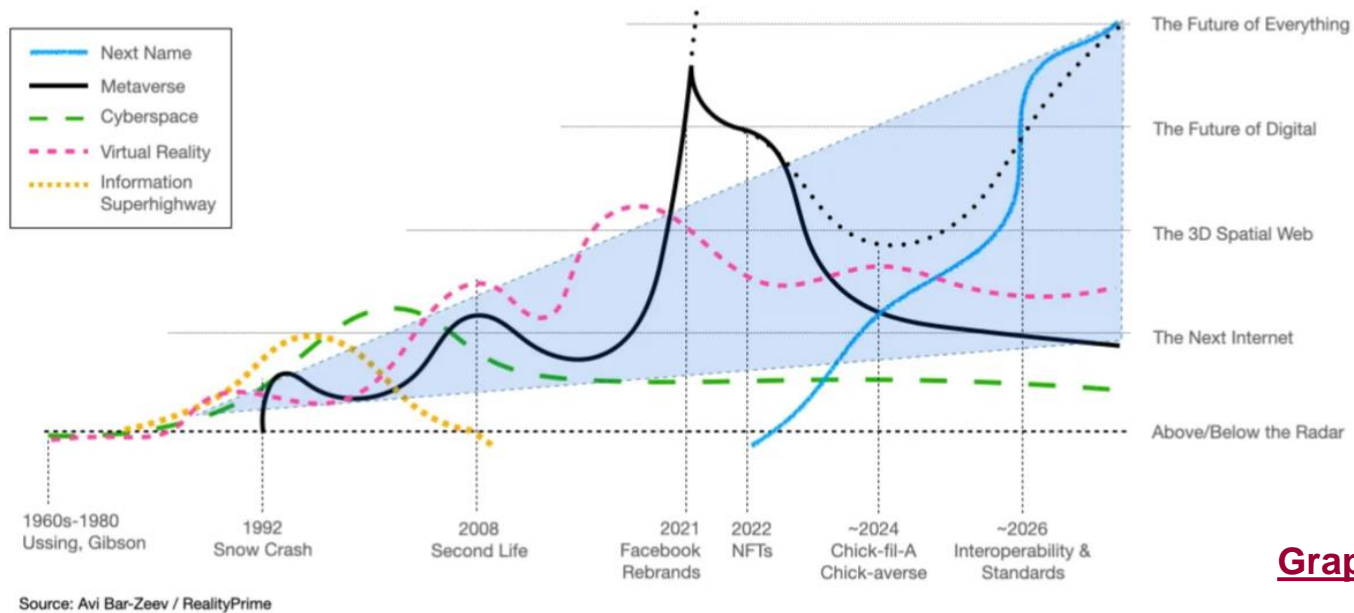
The Metaverse Hype Died Down. Where Does That Leave Colleges That Invested In It?

- Businesses may have backed off the vision of a large, billionaire-controlled metaverse because of its link to Meta (Facebook) … but there are still lots of little metaverses being built in education.

- Even if it's fairly common for an enthusiast to get some momentum behind building a metaverse, it's less common to have that baked into the infrastructure or the budget of the institution.

- Some of the initial lessons that the university wanted to create, like organic chemistry and anatomy labs, required details that raised the expense and priced the school out.

- "I don't have rose-colored glasses on it; it was not a perfect experience for us. But it was the spark that lit the kindling." – University Official.

EdSurge

Metaverse Tumbles

- **Mark Zuckerberg's Metaverse is a Joke Not Shared by Investors**
  The Guardian

- **Facebook's Metaverse VP Begs Employees to Actually Use It**
  Futurism

- **Skepticism, Confusion, Frustration: The Metaverse Struggles**
  The New York Times

- **Maybe the Metaverse, NFTs Aren't the Next Big Things**
  The Street

- **This is Life in the Metaverse**
  The New York Times

- **What Metaverse Learning Will Look Like** *Forbes*

- **College in the metaverse is here. Is Higher Ed Ready?**
  Inside Higher Education

- ***The Metaverse Is Going to College. But Will It Suck?***
  The Daily Beast

- **Disney, Microsoft say Meh to the Metaverse**
  The Wall Street Journal

"Metaversities Face Financial Reality"

Morehouse College students use Meta's virtual reality headsets to enhance their learning in a microbiology class.

- "Faculty and students are taking to learning in the metaverse, but universities wonder how they will pay for it once Meta's ($150 million) two-year pilot program ends."

- "The overall buy-in for the metaverse has cooled with the rising popularity of artificial intelligence."

- "I think virtual reality and really, augmented reality, will inevitably be central to what a learning experience looks like," he said. "But that's probably 20 or 40 years away. We have such a long way to go."

INSIDE HIGHER ED

A "digital twin" of California-based Fullerton College, meaning an exact replica of the college campus in the

Meetings can also be held in the metaverse.

Article

VictoryXR Chem Lab

New Mexico State University's metaversity includes an immersive solar system.

Metaverse Innovators

VICTORYXR™

Students in VXRLabs Biology

VictoryXR's goal is to bring a more immersive way for students to learn through virtual and augmented reality. Since VictoryXR's founding in 2016, online education has rapidly grown in the United States and across the globe. Unfortunately, the traditional classroom has not adapted to online education. In the current form, online students find learning difficult, passive, and unenjoyable via video conferencing.

That is where VictoryXR comes in. We offer immersive classrooms and campuses through virtual reality. This platform allows for students to interact in a synchronous yet virtual environment. Educators are given training and 3D objects (over 6,000 and growing!) to teach a variety of subjects to their students. The best part? Students' grades go up. Student focus goes up. Student enjoyment goes up.

[Article](#)

[Kosy Virtual Remote Teams](#)

[Roam Virtual Space](#)

UCLA in Minecraft
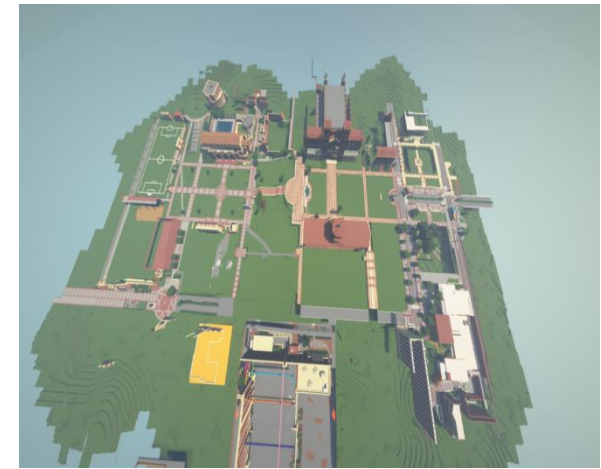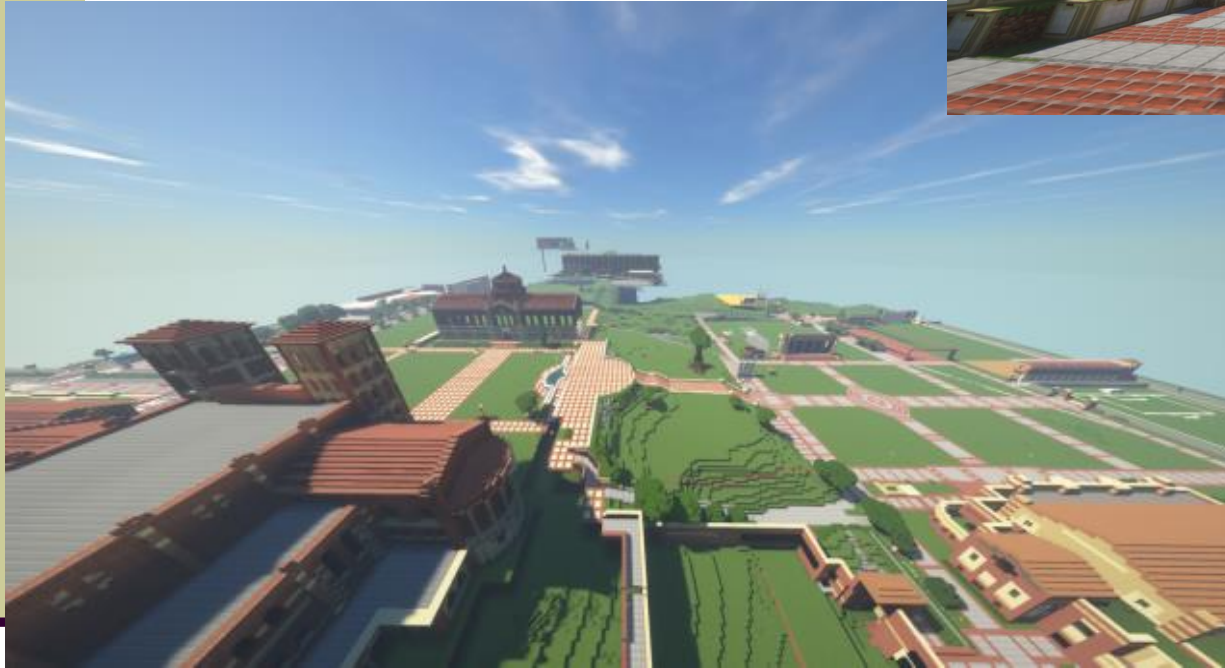
Molloy and co-administrator Chris Ko, a second-year electrical engineering student, created the server with funding from the UCLA Bruin Gaming. Only a few days before, UCLA had announced that spring classes would be held online as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Article Link

NU Nursing 'Metaverse' Build

- With funding from a two-year, $200,000 grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration, this pilot program is designed to increase access to quality health care in underserved communities.

- $50,000 to purchase approximately 70 virtual reality headsets, and the San Diego County Board of Supervisors awarded $25,000 to cover the cost of software and programming for the virtual reality headsets.

- Students how to treat computer-generated patients in the Metaverse, preventing harm to real patients. National University's digital twin campus allows students to teleport to virtual classrooms, lecture halls, lounges, and parks.

Media Release

Philip Rosedale on the Metaverse

'VR headsets are a blindfold to the real world … We have to answer the question, why would I be there? Why am I using that space? We've got to get to that.'
– Philip Rosedale

c|net

[Second Life founder returns to revamp his original metaverse](#)

GeekWire

'Roughly a million users still use Second Life today, but there aren't a hundred million because "it doesn't work for grownups yet" – an avatar can't match the amount of information that's communicated by looking directly at another human's face … perhaps ten years away.'

"The existential risk of humans being placed in 3D spaces is where you don't know where the ads are … and the staggering amount of surveillance data you can get. I personally think there is no way we can go even a little way down that road."

[Article](#)

'Best use of VW learning may be in-world seminars and gatherings' [Transcript](#)

Rosedale & Scoble on Future Tech

- The 'sense of place' in VW is magical

- On producing quality VW activities: The budget for Grand Theft Auto 5 was $400-million, for the detail and experience of it. But costs for teaching, and dancing, and hanging out and giving talks on stage, those ideas are going to carry the day

- Best use may be in-world seminars and gatherings

Video

Scoble & Rosedale Transcript

The Power and the Peril of Virtual Reality in HE

- These tools stand to reshape higher education in some powerful ways. But the immense potential is still only that: potential.

- A future where universities and their learners are divided into virtual haves and have-nots is not difficult to imagine – and it must be prevented.

- After all, an institution may well be on the cutting edge, but for what purpose? Indeed, purpose must be a guiding force for institutions seeking to answer the most pressing questions about immersive learning.

- A well-designed VR curriculum might be entertaining and engaging, but if the strengths of the programme are not tightly aligned with the needs of educators and students, it accomplishes very little.

- Equity, access and inclusion must serve as the driving force behind any conversations related to integration.

- This is not a case of using technology for technology's sake but a purposeful effort to create inclusive healthcare training for a diverse cohort of learners.

Mark Milliron
National University
President / CEO

THE Times Higher Education | IHE Inside Higher Ed

Article

Artificial Intelligence
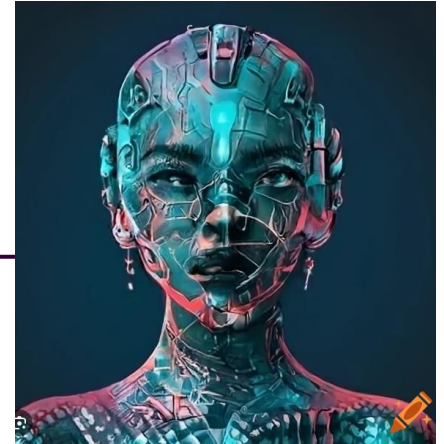
Admissions

- Admissions officers 'wringing hands' over AI college applications
- By 2024 80% of admissions offices plan to use 'inevitable' AI for student application review
- Article in *Inside Higher Education*

Cheating

- Educators scramble to catch cheaters
- Some teachers use AI to prepare syllabi, lectures, presentation slides, exams, and grading.
- Coursera AI for Teachers

Employment

- Preparing students for demand of AI-enhanced workforce
- College 'cheating' with AI may be a careerwise talking-point
- Article in *Inside Higher Education*

What Students Want per Survey

- Students expect 'total flexibility' in pandemic-era classroom

- 90% want to submit assignments online

- 68% want recorded asynchronous lectures

- 67% want online exams

- Majority (61%-83%) want some in-person interaction (small lab sections, group work, symposia)

Article

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
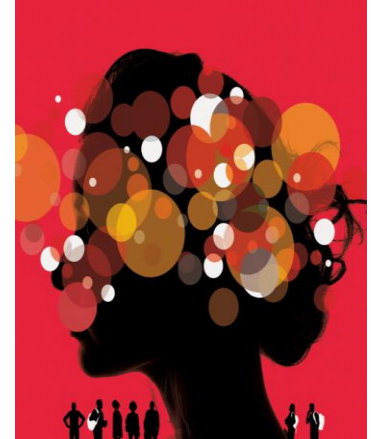
Students Want Virtual-Learning Options

■   The share of students enrolled only in online courses nearly doubled since 2019.

■   "Having everything transitioned to Zoom was actually the world opening up and not closing down."

■   "Remote/hybrid learning plays a vital role in our mission to provide high-quality, accessible education that is affordable and tailored to the needs of our diverse student population."

■   "Remote classes offer an affordable and time-saving way to continue learning."

■   "Virtual learning makes taking a meaningful stand more difficult, because we're not breathing the same air and we can't see the nuances of one another's expressions and reactions as we can when we're present, live, together."

■   "College leaders, she said, need to answer to "how they are supporting their faculty not only in developing their online pedagogy, but also in these questions of burnout, trauma, and stress."

Article

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Students Demand Virtual Learning So Colleges Adjust

- 40% of college administrators prioritizing demand for online learning; 35% reexamining strategies considering student demands

- Older students are also demanding flexibility in learning, expanding across student population

- This growing demand for online and hybrid education has likely not yet reached its peak

- Most administrators looking for balance by 2025 for a more-balanced in-person, hybrid, online courses

Article

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

What Must VW & Ed Tech Do?

- **Prepare for show-time**
  Online is here to stay: Some students will demand it. Administrators are looking for options and have a budget.

- **Understand demands of academia**
  Costs, student overhead, Title IX, privacy, harassment, performance standards, etc.

- **Ease of access**
  Instant teleport for nonmembers, limited function, prebuilt facilities

- **Rich functionality**
  Just as Zoom, Skype, TikTok

"The affordances and resilience of online delivery in this pandemic have permanently embedded online distance education as the advancing partner in the mode of delivery of learning."

The Speedy Future of Delivering Online Learning
Inside Higher Ed

Academia Realities

- Lower state funding
- Demographic dip
- Lower enrollments
- Stressed administration
- Limited budgets
- Adjunctification of faculty
- Demand for course conversions
- Costs of new tech
- Cuts into dining and campus revenue
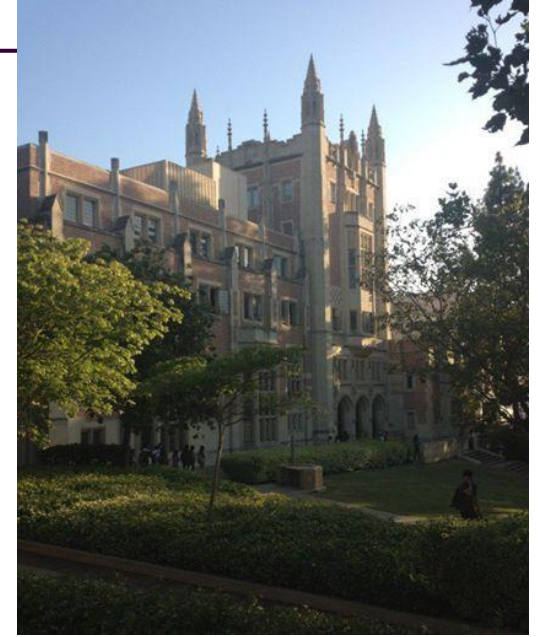
The Year That Pushed Higher Education to the Edge
Chronicle of Higher Education

Sense of Place

"Students expressed their higher-education experience through images of where they have been, and where they are ... The common theme: broadening horizons."

"A Sense of Place" slideshow
The New York Times

A Dimensional Sense of Space

Landmark

**Science Circle
Open-Air Auditorium
in Second Life**

Walk in Another's Skin

Stroking a black rubber hand reduced a participant's implicit racism score

He refers to virtual reality as an "empathy generating machine" to give people experiences they can't have in any other way.

Participants develop increased empathy for differences and suffering by VR immersion and experience

- *Gender Switch*
- *Race Switch*
- *War Zone Experience*
- *Wheelchair Accessibility*
- *Etc.*

Article

Cosplay

Superhero cosplay makes you a better person for one science-backed reason:

- Heroic stories and experiences can create a unique emotional response: elevation

- Ninety-one percent of participants who saw a superhero poster stayed afterward to help, whereas only 75 percent of people who saw the neutral poster did.

- In a virtual reality study, half of the participants were given the power of flight, like Superman. The second half got to fly, too — but as passengers in a helicopter. Flying participants generally helped more quickly than helicopter participants

Inverse

Visualizing 'Doing' Helps Us Learn

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN.

- 'Visualization and action are intimately connected, involving the motor cortex. Thinking about our body doing something— raising an arm or walking forward—activates the motor cortex directly.'

- 'This ability to trigger the motor cortex by imagining an action offers great promise in therapies for patients recovering from stroke and for athletes or dancers working to develop expertise in their craft.'

- 'As we get older, the motor cortex has to work harder to imagine actions, so exercising our visualization skills remains important throughout our lives.'

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN MIND   Article

Avatars & Personality Link   **ELSEVIER**

Virtual Job Fairs & Exchanges

The State of Virtual International Exchange

Inside Higher Education

"There are many more than one ways to engage young people online in collaborative projects and in dialogue."

Virtual Job Recruiting Expands Access to Students

Inside Higher Education

"A new survey from the National Association of Colleges and Employers found that graduates from historically marginalized populations benefited from virtual job recruiting."

Perhaps shared landing page:

'What Are You Here For?'

- ➢ Play
- ➢ Work
- ➢ Education

SL Marketplace

Educare VW Island

- Nonprofit educational NGO
- Simplified experience
- Orientation for educators
- Introduction to VW teaching

Educare Research inc
Non-profit 501(c)(3)
Free Access

Landmark
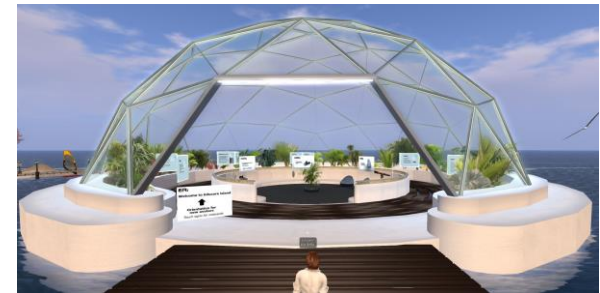
Presentations

VW Presentation / Seminar Topics

- VW Teaching Tactics & Trends
- Transcultural Course Design
- Primers & Prompts for Enticing Lectures
- Handling Difficult Students
- Global Trends for World Solutions in Education
- More Topic Abstracts …
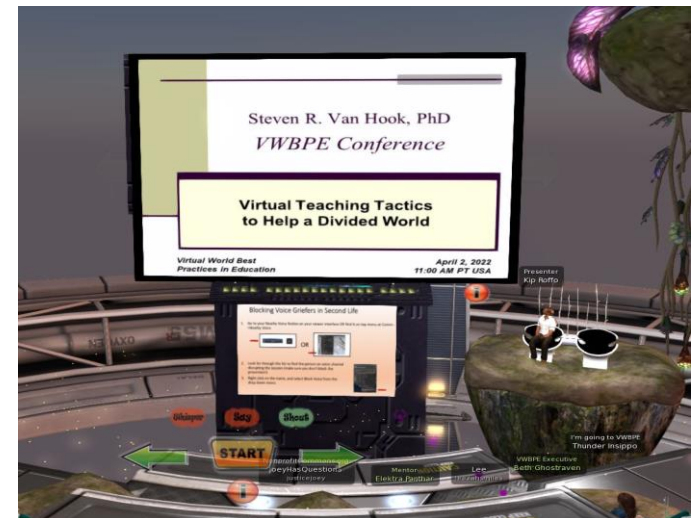
Key Educare Landmarks

EDUCARE LANDMARKS
A Nonprofit Program for International Educators & Students
Steven R. Van Hook, PhD / Kip Roffo in SL
http://wwmr.us

🐒 **Welcome to Educare**
First steps for a new avatar

🐒 **Educare Tour**
Guided flight of the island

🐒 **Main Hall**
Our large-group meeting space

🐒 **Workspace**
Smaller gatherings and conferences

🐒 **Treehouse Meet Spot**
Chill and chat by the beach

🐒 **Educare Sandbox**
Rez and build your own stuff

🐒 **Sunset Cove**
Campfire chat, tai chi, healing hypnosis, touch the Buddha
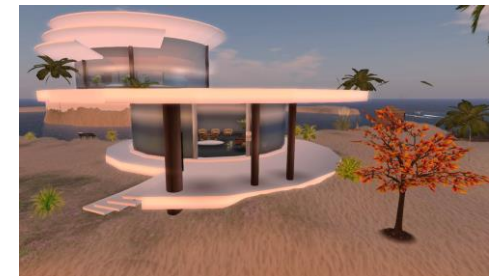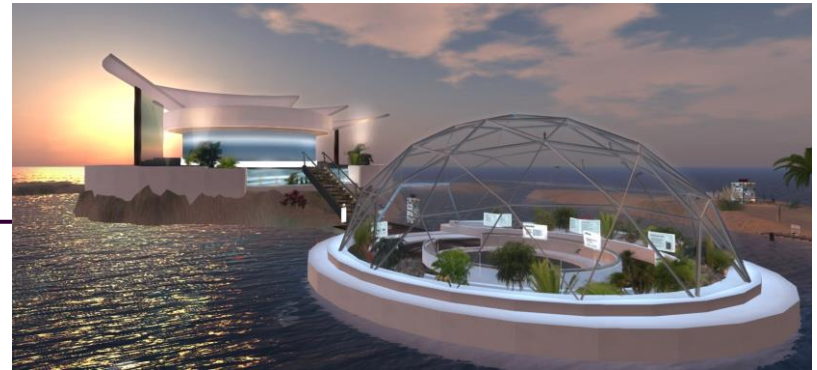
Access
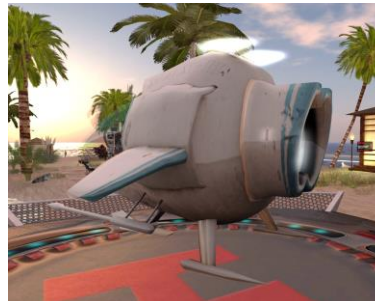
Resources & Rides

:: Region-long water tunnel with video & music ::

JOIN THE EDUCARE GROUP FOR ALL-RIDE ACCESS

- Educare Tour (relax and see)
- Yellow Submarine Ride (underwater world)
- Board Games (chess and checkers)
- Air Balloon (guided and self-guided tours)
- Sail-Surfer (ride the waves)
- TED Talks (videos: be a better you)
- Treehouse (chill and chat by the beach)
- Tai Chi (short-form)
- Healing Hypnosis (hypnotherapy video)
- Dealing with Self-Doubt (video)
- Storytime: Annie (audio / read along)
- Storytime: The Dwarf (audio / read along)
- Storytime: Seal Woman (audio / read along)
- Watermellon Drinks & Dancing (Educare Radio stream)
- X Marks the Spot (undersea tour)
- Sea of Monsters (surround video)
- Sea of Holes (surround video)
- Seagull Flight (surround video)
- Must Be An Angel (surround audio)
- Sea World (surround audio)
- Lectures & Podcasts (audio and video)
- Educare Sandbox (group use)

Contact

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