

Barbara Oakley

Barbara Oakley, PhD, PE is a Professor of Engineering at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan; the Ramón y Cajal Distinguished Scholar of Global Digital Learning at McMaster University; and Coursera's inaugural "Innovation Instructor." Her work focuses on the complex relationship between neuroscience and social behavior. Dr. Oakley's research has been described as "revolutionary" in the Wall Street Journal—she has published in outlets as varied as the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, the Wall Street Journal, and The New York Times. She has won numerous teaching awards, including the American Society of Engineering Education's Chester F. Carlson Award for technical innovation in engineering education. Together with Terrence Sejnowski, the Francis Crick Professor at the Salk Institute, she co-teaches Coursera – UC San Diego's "Learning How to Learn," the world's most popular massive open online course with over two million registered students. Barb is a New York Times best-selling author—her upcoming book Learning How to Learn is geared to give kids aged ten on up neuroscientific tools to help their learning.

Dr. Oakley has adventured widely through her lifetime. She rose from the ranks of Private to Captain in the U.S. Army, during which time she was recognized as a Distinguished Military Scholar. She also worked as a communications expert at the South Pole Station in Antarctica, and has served as a Russian translator on board Soviet trawlers on the Bering Sea. Dr. Oakley is an elected Fellow of the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering.