

Accomplishments to Date:

Over 60 faculty from nine different departments in COE and the College of Arts and Sciences at UGA participated in one or more components of the CTL project during the past five years.

1998-2001:

Activities included faculty group visits to area business and industry settings (May Tours of Industry), faculty summer internships in business, reflective activities (written journal assignments, structured group discussions), seminars, committee work, development of a CTL theoretical framework, informal interaction among faculty across departments and disciplines, data collection, and evaluation. Over 50 courses in the Colleges of Education and Arts and Sciences have been revised to include strategies identified with contextual teaching and learning. Departmental portfolios compiled the work of CTL faculty who integrated CTL into curriculum courses and internships at UGA. A CTL preservice teacher education model was developed which included pre-professional courses, CTL seminars, community/work experiences, and disciplinary courses that integrated CTL concepts into new and existing courses.

2001-2003:

Eight case studies of novice teachers, a cross-case analysis, and reports of surveys and focus group interviews with students of novice teachers who used CTL strategies were prepared by UGA faculty researchers to describe CTL implementation in school settings. Important findings: (1) CTL trained novice teachers used many more active learning strategies, especially collaborative learning, project- and problem-based learning, real-world connections of academic content, community-based learning, and authentic assessment; (2) middle and high school students were much more engaged and “connected” with subject matter, possessed higher levels of process skills and metacognition, and said they learned and were “connected” more with subject matter; and (3) important facilitators and barriers to use of CTL strategies in school classrooms were identified.

Impact on the COE:

The impact of CTL concepts and applications in teacher education occurred through its infusion into existing course requirements by faculty who understand CTL and integrated it into their syllabi and teaching strategies. Teacher education faculty and students understand better the different learning styles and education/career paths for diverse students and honed their skills at teaching diverse students. Participating faculty understand the gap between expectations of businesses and communities for a “good” education and what many students experience in the schools. Immersion in CTL coursework and experiences in the community created an excitement and commitment by preservice students to use CTL in their work as classroom teachers—and they did so. CTL is one of five strands in the GSTEP project, which continues to enhance collaboration by faculty and excellence in teacher education.