

Introduction

The Department of Educational Psychology The University of Georgia (UGA)

Integrating Contextual Teaching Concepts and Strategies into Educational Psychology Courses

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A major mission of UGA's Department of Educational Psychology is to provide coursework and experiences for preservice teachers in the area of psychological foundations. The faculty consists of 12 Professors, 3 Associate Professors, 8 Assistant Professors, and 2 Academic Professionals, for a total faculty of 25. According to U.S. News and World Report (March, 2000), the Department was ranked 15th in the nation among departments of educational psychology. The program within the department most directly connected with the preparation of preservice teachers is the Applied Cognition and Development Program.

Consistent with the tenets of contextual teaching and learning, the Applied Cognition and Development faculty help teachers relate subject matter content to real world situations. The faculty make connections between knowledge and how knowledge is applied in real life. They model this process for teachers who, in turn, learn to model it for their own students in schools. The faculty strive to achieve a variety of goals. These include: (1) an emphasis on problem solving, (2) a multi-contextual approach to learning that includes work place and community learning, (3) a focus on self-regulation and autonomous learning, (4) an appreciation of the diverse life contexts in which learning occurs, (5) encouragement to learn cooperatively, and (6) the implementation of authentic assessment.

The Applied Cognition and Development faculty offer the following courses for undergraduate preservice teachers:

EPSY 2020. Learning and Development in Education. 3 hours. Major theories, ideas, and research findings about learning, and child and adolescent development, including development of motivation, with special emphasis on practical implications for school teaching and learning.

EPSY 2020H. Learning and Development in Education (Honors). 3 hours. Advanced learning and developmental processes and their application to educational settings. Special emphasis is placed on cognitive theory as it relates to school learning and experimental methods for conducting studies of the learner.

EPSY 3010. Child and Adolescent Development for Education. 3 hours. Cognitive,

sociocultural, emotional, and moral development from infancy to early adulthood, with particular emphasis placed on developmental issues relevant to education.

EPSY 2450. Practicum in Contextual Teaching and Learning. 1 hour. This practicum provides a field experience for the Learning and Development in Education course.

In addition, the department offers the following master=s level course, EPSY 6800, for graduate students who are preservice teachers in alternative certification programs, as well as for certified teachers who studying for advanced degrees:

EPSY 6800. Foundations of Cognition for Education. 3 hours. Cognitive psychology as applied to education. Cognitive theories, models, and processes are applied to the teaching and learning of school skills and content areas. Processes such as attention, critical thinking, concept formation, language, memory, and problem solving are examined. Cognitive psychology principles are used to examine and refine instructional methods.