

**An Emerging Framework for
Contextual Teaching and Learning in Preservice
Teacher Education**



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September 30, 2001

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Introduction

The inauguration of contextual teaching and learning (CTL) in the College of Education at the University of Georgia (UGA) has made a significant contribution to the modernization and reformation of teacher education. The contract with the US Department of Education, Office of Adult and Vocational Education, has resulted in many positive benefits for the education of teachers and the professional development of faculty across the UGA campus. This report describes how a conceptual framework for the project was developed, implemented, tested, and redesigned over the 3-year life of the contract.

The most significant aspect of this document is the analysis of the CTL practices that occurred over the life of the project. These data will be used to present a refined theoretical framework that will guide our continued implementation of CTL here at UGA. A final section of this report presents recommendations for the implementation of contextual teaching and learning concepts at other major universities.

The CTL project at UGA has had significant impact across the UGA campus. The project has led to the re-design and delivery of existing teacher education courses and the creation of new and innovative courses and instructional approaches. UGA students as novice teachers have experienced exciting and life-changing situations such as internships engagement in community and public school environments, and other educational opportunities. Across the campus, many UGA faculty have contextualized their instructional practices while promoting authentic learning opportunities for their students.

Department heads and other administrators in the College of Education have conceptualized new contextual approaches to teacher education in their respective disciplines.

As scholars in a major research university, one of the first concerns at UGA was to establish a working theoretical framework that could be adopted and used by many participating researchers and teachers across the university. As a beginning point, the participating faculty of the UGA CTL project chose to customize the nationally accepted theoretical framework that emerged from the scholarly and collaborative efforts of the Ohio State University project that preceded our work. The resulting UGA framework has many similarities to the Ohio State framework, but is more directly situated in theories of cognitive science, psychology, and sociological perspectives of learning.

This report describes the development of the theoretical framework in four phases. First, the establishment of a framework subcommittee consisting of faculty and administrators and the processes that were utilized to create an initial framework will be described. Second, the development of an intermediate framework to guide the project as it was implemented is discussed. The third section describes how the practices of the faculty have suggested changes and modifications. Finally, a redesigned framework that has emerged from our practice is presented. A final section near the end of the document addresses the issues and concerns that might be encountered by other colleges and universities as they implement a similar program.

The UGA CTL Project

Before getting into the framework itself, it might be useful to present a brief, but global overview of the intention of the UGA CTL project. The project was a joint effort of the School of Teacher Education and the School of Leadership and Lifelong Learning in the College of Education in collaboration with the College of Arts and Sciences, School of Professional Studies, local school systems, the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce and local businesses and industries. Originally, the project involved 28 full time faculty members from nine different departments within the College of Education and the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences. As the project nears completion, there are more than 60 faculty partners and too many colleagues from public schools to accurately count.

Project Purpose

The intent of the project was to supplement and enrich existing programs in teacher education and occupational studies. The CTL emphasis addresses the concern that too many students today do not see any purpose in school because they do not believe education has any connection or application to their lives now or into the future. CTL enables teachers to (a) relate subject matter learning to settings where it is used in “real world” life at home, work, and the community; and (b) help students transfer knowledge and problem solving skills learned in school to other life contexts as well as help them prepare for future careers, citizenship, or continued learning.

To achieve its objectives, the CTL project promoted the creation of new and innovative courses, and very diverse curriculum experiences and activities, faculty and student trips to visit business and industrial sites, and internships for faculty and students. The following will illustrate some of the types of changes and activities that occurred.

Core courses, such as EFND 2030 - Foundations of Education, and EPSY 2020 - Learning and Development in Education, were changed conceptually to integrate principles of CTL. As the project continued, specialized classes were developed that focused CTL students on the theory and practice of contextual learning and teaching. Three one-credit reflective seminars were developed and taught with each seminar having a different focus. The first seminar examined how experts use knowledge in authentic work settings. Students taking the second seminar experienced service learning. The last seminar began the process of socializing novice teachers into the world of professional education. After a systematic evaluation of these seminars and courses, two other courses were developed and offered. These were EOCS 4990/6990 - Introduction to Contextual Teaching and Learning and EOCS 4990/6990 - Situated Cognition Theory and Implications for Teaching. The Introduction to CTL was first taught in Spring, 2001, and the Situated Cognition course was opened to CTL students in Maymester, 2000 and again in Maymester, 2001.

In addition to these revised and new courses, many other participating CTL faculty adopted CTL principles in existing courses. For example, Dr. Jonathan Arnold has utilized principles of CTL to teach genetics using field-

based and integrated curricula. Both faculty and students have experienced tours and internships that have impacted their vision of how what is taught is actually applied everyday in the business community. These experiences have occurred through organized tours of business and industry and through internships. Both of these activities have created opportunities for faculty to collaborate among themselves and to find ways to extend their practices outside of the university. For example, more than 40 UGA faculty members from across the campus were involved in summer programs that toured local and regional businesses and community sites where they learned about the application of academic and vocational knowledge to the practical everyday world of work. Other faculty participated in internships in retail, construction, genome research, and environmental education. Also, CTL students were afforded an opportunity for an extended internship at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta among others.

These and other activities have been critically important steps toward the reformation of our teacher education program and provide the reader with a sense of the impact of the CTL project at UGA. Collaboration is being assumed to be an important part of teacher education reform.

“...effective change and learning best thrive where they are supported by collaborative communities. Teams of teachers, other educators, businesspersons, social service personnel, parents, researchers, university faculty and others committed to youth and their learning are all critical to the success of efforts to improve education.” (Lynch, 1997, p.59)

However, the CTL initiative extended the conversation on collaboration to many individuals who until now have been excluded. A broader conversation among diverse communities has opened the doors at UGA for more extensive collaboration in teacher education. At UGA the conversation about contextual teaching has been extended across the campus, but also importantly into the surrounding communities.

The UGA CTL faculty strongly believe in the importance of a theoretical framework to guide our journey towards a contextualized teacher education program. The next section describes the beginning of that journey, which started in Columbus, Ohio in 1997.

Ohio State Theoretical Framework: A Place to Begin

All of the CTL projects are indebted to the seminal work at Ohio State University (OSU). More about the Ohio State framework can be learned by visiting the website at www.contextual.org/. The OSU theoretical framework is organized on the principles and assumptions that learning is; (a) problem based; (b) situated in multiple contexts; (c) fosters self-regulated learning; (d) anchors teaching and learning in students' diverse life; (e) utilizes interdependent learning groups; and (f) employs authentic assessment (Sears & Hersh, 1999). Each of these propositions is explored in greater depth in the following paragraphs.

Learning is **Problem Based**. "Contextual teaching begins by confronting students with a simulated or real problem. As students wrestle with the problem, they begin to realize that it can be viewed from very different perspectives and, to resolve the problem, they need to integrate information from various disciplines.

Once students assume the roles of stakeholders who are affected by the resolution of the problem, they engage in higher-level thinking, disciplined inquiry, and problem-solving.” (p. 5)

Learning is ***Situated in Multiple Contexts***. “When teachers provide opportunities for students to learn in multiple contexts, they are drawing upon the theories of cognition and learning that suggest knowledge and learning are considered to be situated in particular physical and social contexts. Theories of situated cognition assume that knowledge is inseparable from the contexts and activities within which it develops. Thus how a person learns a particular set of knowledge and skills, and the situation in which the person learns, is a fundamental part of what is learned. Building on situated cognition, students should learn knowledge and skills in meaningful contexts such as the home, museums, the community, and work sites.” (p. 5)

Learning ***Fosters Self-Regulated Learning***. “Teachers can foster self-regulated learning by teaching students how to become aware of their own thinking and how to analyze their own thinking habits as well as develop and apply a repertoire of strategies for learning, studying, controlling emotions, and evaluating and directing their effort toward increased learning.” (p. 5)

Learning ***Anchors Teaching and Learning in Students’ Diverse Live Contexts***. “Students and their experiences are part of the context in which teachers teach. Today’s students reflect the values and mores of different cultures and of cultures different from that of the majority of white, middle-class teachers. Students’ cultural and social contexts are an important link to their

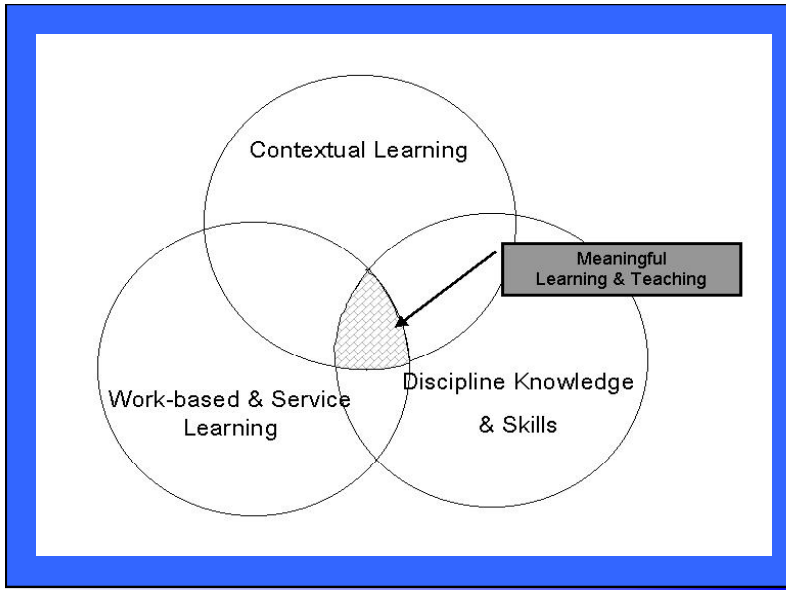
achievements. Students' contexts can be used as instructional platforms to allow students to move from what they know to what they do not know." (p. 6)

Learning ***Utilizes Interdependent Learning Groups***. "Learning is a social process. The influence of others, especially if they are more knowledgeable such as teachers, parents, or other significant adults, can be substantial. Sociocultural theorists conceive of learning as participating more fully in the discourse and practices of learning community while also contributing to the growth of that community (Borko & Putnam, 1999). Students learn by participating in activities of a learning community, acquiring new understandings and deeper understandings as they do so. At the same time, students can influence the understandings and practice of the learning community. The image of teachers as presenters of information is replaced by images of teachers as coaches, facilitators, and mentors." (p. 6)

CTL Employs Authentic Assessment. "Contextual teaching employs assessment which is derived from multiple sources and is on-going and blended with instruction. The multiple sources of evidence of learning are collected over time and in multiple contexts and provide students with opportunities for practice and feedback." (p.6)

Many UGA CTL faculty agree that these are important or even critical concepts for the development of a contextualized model for preservice teacher education. Yet these areas, while obviously related to the cognitive and sociological research literature, do not provide sufficient depth or "connectedness" to formulate a meaningful theoretical framework. As a research

faculty at UGA, we believed that we should push the “theoretical envelope” to explore how bricks from several learning traditions, philosophies, and paradigms



might be mortared in place to establish a solid foundation that supports CTL in a teacher education program.

CTL Model for Preservice Teacher Education

At the beginning of the project the preservice teacher education program was conceptualized as themes of contextual teaching and learning characterized by attributes such as higher-order thinking skills, problem-based orientation, self-regulation, use of meta-cognitive strategies, and sensitivity to matters of equity and diversity. In the original proposal the model was graphically displayed as the model seen here. The productive area of “meaningful learning and teaching” rests at the intersection of overlapping circles representing *contextual learning*, *work-based & service learning*, and *discipline knowledge and skills*. The model involved interdependent group structures and ongoing, blended assessment of learning that occur in community and workplace settings.

Components of the preliminary model include (a) pre-professional courses, (b) community work experiences, (c) reflective seminars, and (d) disciplinary courses.

- ***Pre-Professional Courses*** – These are courses that already exist and are required for all majors in teacher education. Included are educational psychology (Learning & Development) and foundations of education (*i.e.* contemporary and historical issues in American education). Each of these courses has been extensively revised to reflect the principles of contextual teaching and learning.
- ***Community Work & Service Experiences*** – Building on an existing course, Academic Community Learning, (EDMS 5060) CTL students experience a variety of service projects in various community agencies, programs, and settings. In addition a new course, EOCS 5450/7450 Internship in Business & Industry, was revised by project faculty to introduce students to other structured field experience opportunities such as internships in business, industry, or professional work settings. This revised course, targeted to teacher education majors, illustrates how their academic discipline is connected to other disciplines and how these are applied in real-world settings.
- ***Reflective Seminars*** – A new series of one-credit seminars have been created to promote reflection on how field experiences connect education and the world outside of schools. The three seminars include (1) Disciplinary Knowledge: Basic Principles and Ways of Knowing; (2) Workplace and

Community Experiences, and (3) Contextual Teaching and Learning in Schools.

- ***Disciplinary Courses*** – Required courses in curriculum and methods of teaching and student teaching have been or are being revised to incorporate contextual teaching and learning examples and concepts so that students can experiences and apply these strategies in actual school settings.

These elements represented early thinking in the 3-year life of the project. Even at that point, it was recognized that the theoretical framework for the project needed to be expanded and placed on a more solid and scholarly foundation. In order to broaden the foundation, a sub-committee comprised of UGA CTL faculty was established and given the responsibility of creating, monitoring, and re-drafting the framework as experiences dictated the need for changes.

Developing the UGA Framework

At the beginning of the project a simple organizational structure was established that consisted of the Principle Investigators for the project, an Executive Committee, and an array of CTL faculty serving on one of four subcommittees. The sub-committees consisted of (1) the Theoretical Framework Subcommittee; (2) Faculty Development Subcommittee; (3) Program Development Subcommittee; and (4) The Program Evaluation Subcommittee. This report only discusses the work of the Theoretical Framework Subcommittee. The Theoretical Framework Subcommittee consisted of representatives from across the College of Education and the Franklin School of Arts and Sciences.

Table I: Organizational Framework

Co-Principal Investigators:

Dr. Don Schneider, Head of Teacher Education Programs
Dr. Helen C. Hall, Department Chairperson, Department of Occupational Studies

Project Executive Committee

Dr. Dottie Harnish, Director Occupational Research Group

Theoretical Framework Subcommittee

John Schell, Associate Professor & Chairperson	Department of Occupational Studies	College of Education
Dr. Marty Carr, Professor	Educational Psychology	College of Education
Dr. Stewart Foster Assistant Professor	Social Science Education	College of Education
Dr. Richard Hayes Professor	Counseling & HDS	College of Education
Dr. Elizabeth Pate Associate Professor	Elementary Education (Middle School)	College of Education
Julie Tallman Associate Professor	Instructional Technology	College of Education
Carl Warren, Professor	School of Accounting	Terry School of Business

Because there were so many stakeholders in the CTL project, the subcommittee recognized that much of its work would be open to the public and subject to scrutiny at many levels. So, from the beginning, it was assumed that the first phase was the creation of a framework document that would be modified many times as the work of the project progressed and matured.

The framework subcommittee began its work with the belief that learning and education are everywhere and happening all of the time. Specifically, education is not limited to teaching and learning activities that occur only in our nation's schools. As a subcommittee, we make a distinction between the more

generalized concept of “context” and the specific “setting” in which individuals learn.

Initially it seemed that the major components of contextual teaching and learning included student’s real world experiences in the home, community, and workplace. The subcommittee believed that these authentic learning experiences could be an important catalyst for problem solving, development of higher order thinking skills, collaboration, reflection on meaning, and developing sensitivity to issues of equity and diversity. Although these were seen as desirable outcomes, the subcommittee wanted to further explore the theoretical literature to substantiate strong connections between specific programs and practices of contextual teaching and learning.

Table 2

What are the Problems?

- Most learners can’t or don’t use their school learning to solve problems encountered in other contexts (Detterman & Sternberg, 1994).
- Students often fail to learn because they have not seen relevance in school-based learning (Parnell, 1997).

At the same time we assumed that like other learners ...

- Even successful preservice teachers can’t or don’t routinely use their learning to inform their actual teaching practice.

Specific Problems That Were Addressed

To add specificity, a problem statement was developed by the members of the framework subcommittee. In early deliberations, the subcommittee’s focus on *how students use learned information* became a constant theme. At issue was the problem or challenge of *learning transfer*. A basic concern was that middle and high school students

routinely do not make immediate connections between school content and how it is used in the “real world.” The subcommittee also thought that novice teachers exhibited the same concern and did not recognize multiple uses of content learned in education courses. **Table 2: What are the Problems** summarizes the Framework Subcommittee’s central concerns in the beginning.

The subcommittee believed that contextual teaching and learning had the potential to address these learning problems associated with transfer. The group affirmed the theoretical connection between the *lack of routine and predictable*

Table 3: Definitions

Context – Social and psychological constructs including level of conceptual knowledge, interpretation of goals, interpretation of role as participant that the learner brings to bear in the setting or on the task. Transfer across settings is dependent on the ability of the individual to interpret the setting so that they can use the knowledge within that setting.

Settings – The physical places or tasks. Instruction within formal or informal settings doesn’t guarantee transfer unless the individual recognizes similarities in context.

Transfer – The independent use of knowledge & skills across settings. Transfer is dependent on the interpretation of the setting & the construction of the context.

learning transfer and the practice of *embedding teaching and learning in authentic contexts*. In authentic contexts many theorists believe that students live, experience, and make connections between real and everyday life practices and what is taught in high school. The age-old question of high school students “when will I ever need to know this algebra stuff?” becomes a very important one – one that the framework subcommittee believed should be answered to the satisfaction of the learner and the teacher. The members of the sub-committee assumed that when learning is contextualized, multiple uses of information can be

enabled. This quest for learning transfer became a cornerstone for the work of the subcommittee.

A last assumption that guided the work of the framework subcommittee was that the issues of transfer and “real world” connections are just as true for novice teachers as they are for their future students. The committee believed that beginning teachers should be immersed in contextual teaching and learning experiences in their professional education classes.

The framework subcommittee also saw the need for specific definitions for key terms. Included were terms such as *context*, *setting*, and *transfer*. An operational definition of each was developed so that faculty across the college and the UGA campus could use these terms and mean the same thing.

Processes for Developing the Framework

From the beginning, the framework subcommittee was committed to a democratic, yet creative, process. It was recognized that the framework would be central to the entire project, so the subcommittee took its assignment very seriously. The process for creating a framework was to:

- Create a preliminary but public document for review and feedback by the entire UGA CTL community.
- Following feedback, an intermediate version would be created that would guide the project.

Consistent with the need for a framework unique to the UGA project, preliminary work reflected both psychological and sociological perspectives on learning. A variety of cognitive learning assumptions were represented. From

the social perspective, learning communities often shape the context and setting in which learning takes place. Psychological perspectives illustrate how cognition shapes both mental schema and the social and physical environments. It is within these cognitive and social contexts where learners interpret and make sense of their lived-in world. The subcommittee viewed these perspectives as parallel and, yet, often connected them across traditional theoretical and philosophic boundaries.

Questions & Initial Responses. To begin the development of a preliminary framework, the subcommittee started by asking a series of theoretical and philosophical questions of themselves. As a group, they spent many hours brainstorming by generating both appropriate questions to ask and then some preliminary responses. To facilitate discussion and creativity, Facilitate.com software was employed. This approach allowed members of the subcommittee to post an idea and react to the thoughts of others unencumbered by face-to-face social restrictions. These data could then be combined and presented to the entire CTL community for further refinement.

To start the electronic discussion, a series of questions that could be posted on [Facilitate.com](https://www.facilitate.com) was developed. During the process, these questions were asked and electronically debated. The resulting questions and selected summative responses of the subcommittee are presented in **Table 4: Questions and Selected Subcommittee Responses.**

Table 4:

Questions

Selected Subcommittee Responses

Table 4:

Questions	Selected Subcommittee Responses
WHAT IS TRUTH FROM A CONTEXTUAL VIEWPOINT?	For the purposes of this project and the supporting framework, we have come to view truth as a relative concept subject to individual interpretation. Further, truth is always contextualized in the mind of the learner. We have come to believe that truth is transformed over time. Relative truth is interpreted through self-reflection, and intellectual development. Such a view of truth promotes transferable interactions between what the learner knows and how he or she knows it.
WHAT IS THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE FROM A CONTEXTUAL VIEWPOINT?	Knowledge represents our current understanding of the truth. Because we can never know the truth fully, our knowledge is necessarily incomplete. What we know is an artifact of how we understand the consequences of our own actions in the world. As such, knowledge is pragmatic and represents the outcome of our current efforts to make sense of the world. By making sense of the world learners achieve personal meaning which can result in higher levels of empowerment. What we can know, however, is a function both of what we already know and the process by which we know it.
WHAT IS LEARNING IN CONTEXTUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING?	Learning is the dynamic and developmental process of how we actively acquire knowledge. Since knowledge is not static, learning is necessarily an act of relating of knowledge that occurs in the context of what we already know. It also involves how we know, and what we know, and elements the environment offers either to confirm or deny what we know. Our ability to learn changes as we develop a greater or lesser capacity for making sense of such relationships. Learning to identify and solve problems in multiple contexts is thought to increase transfer.
WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE LEARNER FROM A CONTEXTUAL VIEWPOINT?	Through self-reflection and discourse with others, the learner actively pursues self-development in the search for meaning and understanding of knowledge and truth. In this pursuit, the learner is obligated to be prepared and committed to growth through learning. We believe learners should not only participate in contexts provided by teachers but should also create their own contexts for producing, testing, generating, applying, and transferring knowledge.
WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER FROM A CONTEXTUAL VIEWPOINT?	The teacher deliberately facilitates the process by which learners come to know. This facilitation includes not only transmittal of information but also the creation of intentional contexts for producing, testing, generating, applying, and transferring knowledge. Perhaps more important than teacher creation of context is how teachers encourage learners to create and interpret their own contexts for learning. With this type of learner participation comes empowerment of

Table 4:

Questions	Selected Subcommittee Responses
	<p>the learner.</p> <p>The teacher is a bridge connecting learners to the world. By sharing personal, real world experiences, the teacher helps learners understand their own relationships with the world. In addition to being a teacher, facilitator, and link to the world, the teacher is also a learner.</p>
<p>WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL FROM A CONTEXTUAL VIEWPOINT?</p>	<p>From such a perspective, the school represents a formalized setting in which intentional creation and development of the learning process is fostered. Although the school provides a formal institution for facilitation of learning, learning can occur anywhere.</p> <p>The goal of schooling in a democratic society is to create the conditions for maximizing the development of citizens who will become effective participants in the larger society.</p>
<p>WHAT IS EDUCATION FROM A CONTEXTUAL VIEWPOINT?</p>	<p>Although education is a legitimate focus of schooling, we can learn anywhere at any time. A major purpose for this activity is the promotion of lifelong learning. Further, learning and education comprise a dual process resulting in individual change. We accept that teaching represents deliberate attempts at education, and that learning is the process by which one becomes educated. As such, we also believe that the specific things that one learns occur in a particular time and space, which may properly be referred to as the setting. The setting, therefore, is but one aspect of this environment that comprises the context for teaching and learning. Teachers as educators should take care to provide learners with contextual education as opposed to relying only on the context of schooling.</p> <p>Education is also for the preparation of youth for the adult world with the expectation that they will become active agents for social change and justice. Such reconstructionist approaches strive to empower learners with appropriate tools for social action. Among these tools are skills, thinking and processing strategies, problem-solving abilities, content knowledge, and connections with similar contexts. A desired outcome is an informed citizenry committed to making the world, globally, locally, and individually, a more livable place. A further purpose is to stimulate the learner to deeper curiosities about life, the world and its peoples.</p>

The initial framework was then developed into a text document that included much of our background discussion and a set of implications for

education assuming a theoretical base of contextual teaching and learning.

Those early implications included the beliefs listed in Table 5.

Table 5

**Educational Implications for a
Program of Contextual Teaching and Learning**

- The voice or voices of students is important.
- The learners come complete with a set of experiences that have shaped who they are.
- Purposeful context-based learning and teaching is deeply immersed in communities in and out of school.
- A school curriculum is not necessarily the most important thing in a learner's education -- instead, it is just one piece of a total education.
- It is necessary to spend time getting to know students, where they came from, and where they are headed and how what we as teachers can offer them fits into a larger scheme.
- We, as teachers, must constantly question our own philosophy of education.
- We, as teachers, must continue our own learning.
- We, as teachers, share the role of promoting the social good.
- We live in a democratic society and it is possible to model this in the classroom.

Even at that early stage of development for members of the sub-committee, it was believed that contexts were many faceted. Issues of gender, age/stage of development, learner attitudes, environment, classroom atmosphere, physical health, day of the week, interpretation of truth, and the preservation of a constitutional democracy should all serve in one way or another as a context for learning. Of course members of the sub-committee recognized that the credibility of the framework relied on its connections with recognized educational and cognitive research. One aspect that made this an interesting committee assignment was that each member came to the problem from a different perspective. Often it took a lot of time just to recognize that we were arguing about the same idea only using words and concepts from a different paradigm. After a time, the sub-committee was able to narrow down the

discussion to a relatively few theories. As a result, these face-to-face and electronic discussions lead to the development of the initial framework that was later presented to the entire CTL community for comment and suggestions in the form of an *Initial UGA CTL Framework*.

Initial UGA CTL Framework

The first public meeting to discuss the theoretical framework was held on February 19, 1999. At this meeting the preliminary framework comprised of (a) a preamble, (b) definitions of key terms (context, settings, and transfer), (c) the set of questions that the framework sub-committee had asked itself, (d) statements of implications for teaching and learning, (e) examples of practice, and (f) references used was presented to the faculty.

Also included was a chart that compared teaching approaches using CTL and traditional methods and assumptions. This chart was included to highlight the differences of contextual teaching and learning when compared to instructional practices that are classroom based and teacher-oriented. The chart is included in ***Table 6: Assumptions and Practices of CTL and Traditional Teaching***.

Table 6	
Assumptions & Practices of CTL	Assumptions & Practices of “Traditional” Teaching
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are actively engaged • Students view learning as relevant • Students learn from one another through cooperation, discourse, teamwork, and self-reflection • Learning is related to "real world" and/or simulated issues and meaningful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are passive recipients • Students regard content as having no relevant application • Students work in isolation. Peer review and/or discussion is absent • Learning is abstract and theoretical

problems

- Students are encouraged to take responsibility for the monitoring and development of their own learning
- Appreciating students' diverse life contexts and prior experiences are fundamental to learning
- Students are encouraged to become active participants in the improvement of society
- Student learning is assessed in multiple ways
- The perspectives and opinions of students are valued and respected
- Teacher acts as a facilitator of student learning
- Teacher employs a variety of appropriate teaching techniques
- The learning environment is dynamic and exciting
- Higher order thinking and problem solving is emphasized
- Students and teachers are prepared to experiment with new approaches - creativity is encouraged
- The process of learning is as important as the content that is learned
- Learning occurs in multiple settings and contexts
- Knowledge is interdisciplinary and extends beyond the boundaries of conventional classrooms
- Teacher accepts his/her role as a learner
- Learning in multiple contexts allows students to identify and solve problems in new contexts (transfer)
- The teacher is considered the sole arbiter of student learning
- Little or no consideration is given to the experiences and backgrounds of students
- Students not encouraged to become involved in social improvement
- Learning is assessed in a singular, standardized format
- Student perspectives are unsolicited or undervalued
- Teacher controls and dictates all aspects of the instructional environment
- Teacher displays a limited repertoire of teaching techniques
- The learning environment is static and routine
- Over reliance on rote memorization in approaches to teaching and learning occurs
- Little risk and experimentation in approaches to teaching and learning occurs
- Assimilation of content is considered singularly important
- Learning occurs in one setting (i.e., the classroom)
- Disciplinary content is taught in isolation
- Teacher is viewed as the primary source of knowledge
- Students have limited opportunities to transfer understandings to new situations or contexts

This comparison of “modern” and “traditional” assumptions and practices was not well received by the entire CTL faculty at UGA at the February meeting.

While some thought it was a useful comparison, others thought that it unnecessarily polarized the faculty because some practices were considered useful even if somewhat traditional. Still others wondered at the definition of such a general term as “traditional.” Since the term does not specify a particular educational philosophy or practice it has remained a part of the framework.

The suggestions and comments made at the February meeting were incorporated into a second version of the initial framework. Primarily the subcommittee was asked to make the document more user friendly by adding more information about the theory that supports CTL, adding more specific examples of CTL practice, and making the document generally more readable for non-educators.

Revised Framework

The members of the subcommittee developed the next version of the framework based on the faculty feedback from the February meeting and additional work. Included in that version was (a) an introductory statement, (b) a statement of the purpose and goals of the project, (c) a discussion of how CTL differs from traditional teaching and learning, (d) illustrations of CTL practice, (e) brief explanation of learning theories that support CTL, (f) considerations for CTL practice, and (g) additional vignettes to stimulate thinking and innovative practice among UGA faculty. The final results of this stage of the project’s development can be seen on the [UGA CTL website](#). This revised framework was publicly presented at a meeting attended by administrators, faculty members serving on a

variety of CTL subcommittees, partners from business and industry, public school administrators and teachers, and representatives of the US Department of Education. Overall the framework meeting was very positive. Members of the CTL community were divided into groups and asked to provide specific feedback on the document. Among the constructive suggestions was to use simpler terms to assist the non-professional educator who had become our partner in this venture. Many also requested additional vignettes that illustrate current CTL practice. These comments were taken into consideration in the development of the next version of the UGA framework.

Vignette 2: Patricia Cincotta

This project involved a class of students profoundly disabled with cerebral palsy in the school adjacent to ours. My fourth grade students have been acting as peer helpers in this classroom and would like to incorporate more learning into the situation. With help from the teachers of the special education class, I decided to form my class into four groups. One group will learn to take data of the positive emotional reactions of the special education students when they go to visit the class. They will graph their data and try to elicit more positive responses. The second group will do research on cerebral palsy and try to meet more who have it. The third group will interview people with occupations that work with the special education children. They will compose their own questions and set up the interviews themselves. The fourth group will research articles that have been written on the subject of peer helpers from regular education working with students in special education situations. Every group will learn something and will share their findings at the end of our project.

Key changes to the framework

presented at the public meeting included the addition of vignettes to illustrate contextual practice and the addition of specific references to learning theories that support our efforts. The next section describes these additions.

Vignettes. At the request of many members of the CTL community, a number of vignettes that illustrated contextual teaching and learning in a variety of instructional settings were incorporated throughout the document. For the purpose of providing practical examples of contextual teaching and learning, the intermediate framework included several examples of current practice taking place in public schools. Vignette #2 is provided here as an

example of our thinking about contextual teaching and learning at that time just a few months into our project. At the end of the framework document were other vignettes that embodied other aspects of CTL. Included were practice examples of CTL at almost every educational level. The vignettes ranged from middle school social studies programs to doctoral level courses in advanced learning theories. These examples were provided to make the framework document more accessible; to eliminate unnecessary educational jargon, and to illustrate what several faculty meant as contextual teaching and learning. (All of the vignettes can be read at www.coe.uga.edu/ctl. Follow the links to “Theoretical Framework”).