

New Course Application

Course Title: FCID 3100 – Becoming an Effective Peer Learning Assistant

Computer Title: Peer Mentoring

Course Description:

This weekly seminar will introduce students to current research findings on how people learn, review proven strategies for engaging undergraduates in active learning in introductory STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) courses, and offer opportunities to model effective teaching practices with in-class group activities.

Course Objectives or Expected Learning Outcomes:

Students taking this course will be able to:

1. Integrate active-learning techniques into their teaching
2. Teach learners with different levels of ability
3. Employ effective questioning techniques
4. Help students become self-directed learners
5. Use different ways to assess and evaluate students

Topical Outline:

Week	Topic
1	Orientation to the science classroom and the LA experience
2	Preconceptions and their influence on science learners
3	Understanding cognition of science learners
4	Exploring and enhancing student motivation
5	Factors affecting classroom climate
6	Challenging classroom scenarios
7	<i>Spring break : Mid-term course evaluation</i>
8	How do students develop mastery
9	Promoting self-directed learning in students
10	How does feedback improve learning
11	The various skills and roles of a science teacher
12	Discussion of emerging teacher identity <i>Reminder: Capstone essay and presentations</i>
13	Capstone essays due & 5 minute presentations
14	5 minute presentations (contd.) & Program evaluation

University Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy:

This course is governed by the UGA Academic Honesty policy (<http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>) Questions related to course assignments and the UGA Academic Honesty Policy should be directed to the instructors.

Comments:

More UGA students start as STEM majors than graduate with STEM degrees. Typically, 10-30% of students pursuing a B.S. degree receive grades of D, F, W in introductory STEM courses. This low success rate leads to the term “gatekeeper” courses - a handful of courses that end many STEM careers. With assistance from the Office of STEM Education and funding from the Board of Regents, several UGA STEM departments will directly address this problem in a program that features the involvement of Peer Learning Assistants (PLAs) in many of these gatekeeper courses. Peer assisted learning generally describes a system in which undergraduate students who previously succeeded in the gatekeeper course are provided training and guidance, both in subject content and pedagogy, and then become involved in various ways in helping current students to succeed. Examples of PLA roles include facilitating small group problem solving sessions, assisting graduate teaching assistants in supervising laboratory sections, and providing supplementary instruction in weekly breakout sections. Involving PLAs in introductory courses has been demonstrated to be a highly effective strategy for increasing student retention and success in introductory STEM courses. The nationally recognized program pioneered at the University of Colorado (<https://laprogram.colorado.edu/>) identifies three key components of a PLA experience: **content**, **practice**, and **pedagogy**. PLAs will have demonstrated content mastery by their previous performance in the course and, in addition, will meet with the instructor periodically to review current material presented in class. PLAs will receive practice through their supervised interactions with students in a lecture and/or laboratory setting. The third component, pedagogy, will be provided by the course that is the subject of this application (see Topical Outline).