

Proposal to attach ORC GE Credit to Psychology 390: Preceptor Seminar From Department of Psychology

This request to the General Education Committee is to attach Oral Communication (ORC) General Education credit to Psychology 390, a Preceptor Seminar for students working with faculty to co-teach Psychology 126, “Principles of Psychology: Experimental Foundations.” Our request is made following extensive work to systematize and regularize the Preceptor Seminar. Though we request ORC credit for the current Semester I (2003-04) offering of the Psychology 390 Seminar, we do not anticipate, nor will we support retroactive applications for ORC credit from preceptors from previous terms.

As illustrated in Figure 1, Psychology 390 and Psychology 126 are functionally yoked courses in which oral communication skills are central to the pedagogy of teaching laboratory science that supports the disciplinary content and skills of psychological investigative research.

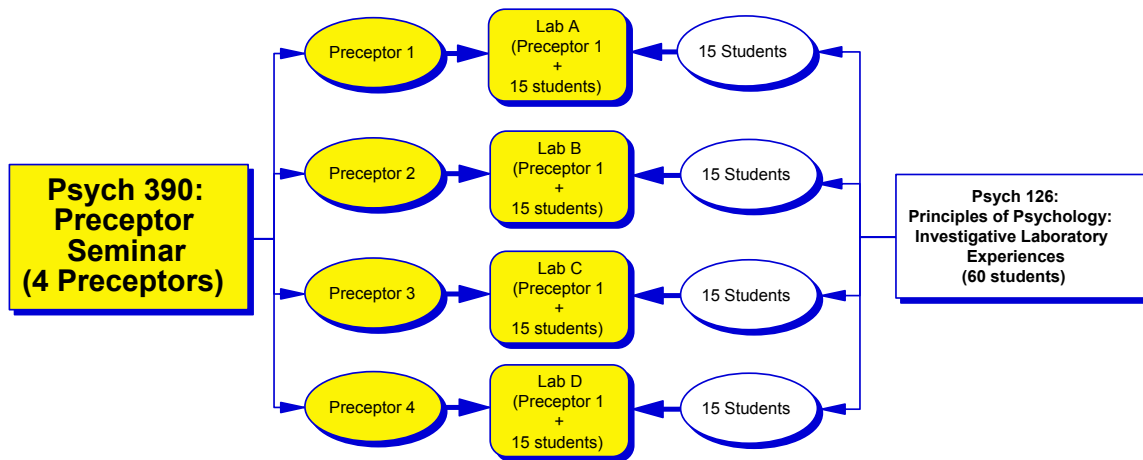


Figure 1. Functionally yoked courses, Psychology 390 and Psychology 126

Psychology 390 and Psychology 126 in broad-brush strokes:

- Psychology 390 Preceptor Seminar is for four student Preceptors. The seminar incorporates specific instruction, strategies, practice, and feedback to develop oral communication competence and confidence instrumental to teaching laboratory science. Preceptors meet as a Psychology 390 Seminar once a week during which each preceptor will do the following:
 1. Develop and discuss personal goals for the seminar
 2. Develop and present three oral presentations based on readings from the text, McKeachie (2003) *Teaching Tips* and primary literature in teaching laboratory science.
 3. Develop active listening skills and teach them to Psych 126 students
 4. Receive coaching on developing and presenting mini-lectures to Psych 126 students
 5. Facilitate three seminar discussions
 6. Receive one-on-one coaching on communication skills in teaching laboratory science
 7. Keep a journal of observations
 8. Write a response paper integrating journal and readings
 9. Receive feedback and evaluation

- Psychology 126 (“Principles of Psychology: Experimental Foundations”) consists of investigative laboratory content and experiences for 60 students in which each Preceptor works with approximately 15 students in 11 three-hour labs during the semester, co-teaching with one of four psychology faculty plus two library faculty.

Psychology 390 in more detail:

Prior to the beginning of the semester, Preceptors meet in a half-day Preceptor Workshop with the faculty person teaching the Psychology 390 Seminar and the faculty co-teaching the Psychology 126 laboratories. For the workshop and as a resource for the Psychology 390 Preceptor Seminar the Department of Psychology has developed a complete and extensive Preceptor Manual that describes the content and structure of the Psychology 390 Seminar (Copy available for review by GEC if requested). The Preceptor Manual includes the following:

Overview of Expectations for Preceptors

1. Communication Tips for Preceptors (by previous Preceptors and Professors)
2. Mid-semester Lab Preceptor Evaluation Form (feedback to Preceptors by Psych 126 students)
3. Cross-disciplinary References on Science Teaching
4. Lab Protocols for Preceptors (Guidelines for teaching each lab)
5. Example: A Good Lab Write-up (basis for oral and written feedback to Psychology 126 students)
6. Example: A Good Citation Skeleton (rubric for oral and written feedback to Psychology 126 students)
7. Example: Lab Exam (basis for oral discussion leading to development of a new one)
8. Instructions for Collaborative Lab Exam Grading
9. Example: Photo Release (basis for discussion of the Principle of Informed Consent)
10. Bring-a-Thing Team Builder (Preceptors co-lead this active listening exercise for Psych 126 students)
11. Nominal Group Process (Formative oral group process)
12. Poster Evaluation Form (to be used in oral and written feedback to poster authors)
13. Lab Report Checklist (rubric for discussing lab write-ups orally and in written feedback)
14. Preceptor goals samples (Guides for Preceptors own, to be written and discussed in seminar)
15. The Psychology 126 Lab Manual (the content for the Psychology 126 laboratory experiences co-taught by the Preceptors)

How oral communication competence will be developed and evaluated:

The Psychology 390 Preceptor Seminar will “help students achieve a level of oral communication competence that is appropriate to the generally educated student” (ORC Guidelines) as they are prepared to co-teach eleven 3-hour labs during the semester, each with a mini-lecture prepared by the preceptors.

- At the beginning of the semester each Preceptor is assigned to write a brief statement about his/her own goals for the Psychology 390 Seminar. These are discussed early during the first meeting of the Psychology 390 Seminar in the semester. This set of goals serves as a self-reference for each Preceptor's own experiences.
- ***Oral presentations on the topic of teaching laboratory science:***

Readings are assigned from the following set to provide the basis for three oral presentations by each student:

- Appleby, D. C. (1994, May/June). How to improve their teaching with the course syllabus. *APS Observer*, 18-19, 26.
- Glaser, R., & Takanishi, R. (1986). Creating a knowledge base for education: Psychology's contributions and prospects. *American Psychologist*, 41(10), 1025-1028.
- Helgeson, S. L. (1985). Research in college science teaching: Cognitive levels and reasoning. ERIC/SMEAC Special Digest No. 1, *Journal of Chemical Education*, 65(5), 449-450.
- McGovern, T. V., Furumoto, L., Halpern, D. F., Kimble, G. A., & McKeachie, W. J. (1991). Liberal education, study in depth, and the arts and science major—Psychology. *American Psychologist*, 46(6), 598-605.
- McKeachie, W. (2003) *Teaching tips: strategies, research, and theory for college and university teaching* (11th ed.). New York: Houghton-Mifflin, with the following chapters focusing on oral communication:
- Ch. 4: Meeting a class for the first time (what to say and how to say it)
 - Ch. 5: Facilitating Discussion—listening, questioning
 - Ch. 6: Lecturing
 - Ch. 12: Laboratory Teaching
 - Ch. 14: Collaborative and Cooperative Learning
 - Ch. 17: Using communication and information technologies effectively
 - Ch. 19: Facilitating active learning
 - Ch. 23: Improving your teaching (seeking consultants; listening to feedback)
- Murray, F. S., & Rowe, F. B. (1979). Psychological laboratories in the United States prior to 1900. *Teaching of Psychology*, 6(1), 19-21.
- Puente, A. E., Matthews, J. R., & Brewer, C. L. (Eds.). (1992). *Teaching Psychology in America: A history* (pp. 1-8). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Sanford, E. C. (1891). A laboratory course in physiological psychology. *American Journal of Psychology*, 4, 412-424.
- Woodworth, R. S. (1938). Eye movements. In R. S. Woodworth (Ed.), *Experimental psychology* (pp. 576-594.). New York: Henry Holt & Company.

- **Active Listening:**

Each Preceptor co-facilitates an active listening exercise called “Bring-a-Thing” with the Psychology 126 students. The focus is on speaking plus asking open questions, paraphrasing, posture, and the role of eye contact.

- **Mini-Lecture Presentations:**

Each student prepares and delivers eight mini-lectures of 10-15 minutes each that are presented to lab groups of 15 students each.

- **Psych 390 Seminar discussions**

Each student has responsibility for coordinating the general agenda and discussion for two weekly meetings during the semester in the Psychology 390 seminar. The general plan is as follows:

The discussion facilitator begins by listing Agenda items that have come up, plus any others that people suggest for the day following a format demonstrated in the first meeting by the professor of the Psychology 390 Seminar. Each week one of the students leads a discussion reviewing the previous week’s lab activity, as well as addressing any issues related to the upcoming week’s activity.

Each week the responsibility to serve as Recorder of the discussion is rotated, meaning about 3 times per Preceptor for the semester. It is the responsibility of the Recorder to listen actively to the discussion, recording minutes of seminar discussions and actions. After each meeting these minutes are emailed to Preceptors and faculty involved in co-teaching the Psychology 126 labs. These minutes provide a valuable record of what we together discover as we teach this course together.

- ***One-on-One Oral Communication Coaching***

Prior to each week's lab, each Preceptor meets with the faculty member with whom they will be co-teaching a particular Psychology 126 lab. Each meeting is scheduled for one hour. In the meeting Preceptors receive coaching and helpful guidance with suggested communication protocols for teaching the lab the following week. In some cases protocols are oral and Preceptors must actively listen and take notes in order to remember the helpful suggestions provided for lab. In other cases the oral coaching is supplemented by written protocols.

- ***Journal of Observations***

Preceptors' work in co-teaching Psychology 126 work is a main substantive and experiential focus in the Psychology 390 Seminar. Preceptors keep a journal/log with regular entries made each week regarding their observations and reflections on their experience in all areas of their work.

The journal/log includes insights, what works, what is challenging, and what steps Preceptors plan to follow to meet the challenge, how their teaching has changed from each lab that they co-teach, student behaviors, etc. The journal/log is turned in at the end of the semester and reviewed and evaluated for completeness by the professor teaching the course in consultation with the rest of the Psychology 126 psychology faculty.

- ***Response Paper***

Students write a final integrative paper of between five to seven pages based on their journal/log, relating their experiences to their reading of McKeachie's Teaching Tips (11th Ed.), as well as eight classic readings in the teaching of science. The integrative paper will be evaluated and graded by the professor teaching the Psychology 390 Seminar in consultation with the other faculty teaching the course as one component of evaluation. There will be no new research required, but rather the response paper will contain points learned from experience communicating with the Psychology 126 students, readings on laboratory teaching, log/journal/ reflections on experiences, and primary literature on science teaching pedagogy. The response paper must also relate to the goals they specifically identified for their Preceptor experience, and be related to aspects of science education studied, including effective oral communication in science laboratory education.

- ***Feedback and Evaluation***

Each semester when the Psych 390 Preceptor Seminar is taught, formative evaluative feedback will be provided at mid term both from Psychology 126 student responses as well as from the professors who have observed the Preceptors in their teaching of the labs. Two standard forms will be used to evaluate Preceptor oral behaviors during each lab. See attached copies titled "Lab Presentation Evaluation Sheet" and "Self Rating for Lab Presentation." These serve as the basis for feedback to the Preceptor in the five minutes after the conclusion of the lab. In addition, all professors' forms are collected by the faculty person teaching the seminar and used in a meeting of all faculty at mid term after the first four of the eight labs to discuss performance of each preceptor. The results of the meeting will be fed back privately one-on-one to each Preceptor by the faculty person teaching the Psychology. The faculty person will mention areas where faculty have indicated that Preceptors have done well, as well as provide suggestions based on faculty feedback for ways to help Preceptors make their oral communication even better. During the second four of the eight labs of the semester, preceptor performance will continue to be observed and evaluated by professors using the same standardized form. The same process for feedback will be followed as was followed mid term.

At the conclusion of the Psychology 390 seminar, the Preceptors will be asked to fill out the Course Evaluation Supplement for ORC courses found at <http://www.stolaf.edu/offices/academic-planning/webforms/ORCsup.doc>. Feedback provided by Preceptors' responses to the Course Evaluation Supplement will be used to improve the ORC component of the Psychology 390 seminar for the next offering.