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Georgia Southern to host free screening of “The School in the Cloud,” Q&A with area experts to follow

March 8, 2019

On Wednesday, March 27, Georgia Southern University College of Education (COE) will host a screening of “The School in the Cloud,” a film that explores the potential of self-organized learning. The screening, which is free and open to the public, will begin at 6 p.m. in the Ogeechee Theatre, located in the Student Union on the Armstrong Campus.

The documentary follows a three-year experiment conducted by Sugata Mitra, a professor of educational technology in England, in which unmanned internet kiosks were installed in varying locations from remote villages in West Bengal to a school in northeast England. Mitra’s work demonstrates and examines the ability of children to self-organize their learning.

Mitra’s project began in 1999 with small-scale experiments to garner public attention. His research continued to show that groups of students, if given access to the internet, can learn almost anything on their own. Mitra’s efforts earned him the first-ever \$1 million TED Prize award, which he used to help create the first School in the Cloud lab, where students, regardless of socioeconomic status, could engage and connect with information and mentors online. Located in Killingsworth, England, the lab opened its doors in December 2013, and now seven additional labs have since been pioneered all over the world.

According to Mitra, a Self-Organized Learning Environment (SOLE) can exist anywhere there is a device with access to the internet and students ready to learn. Through his research, the School in the Cloud website now provides materials and toolkits to assist people across the world with creating a SOLE and running SOLE sessions.

Following the screening, the COE will host a Q & A session with local professionals in the fields of education, instructional technology and child psychology.

This screening is a part of the “Education Exposed Film Series” that is taking place on the Armstrong Campus throughout the Spring 2019 semester. The series is being offered at no charge to students or the community as a result of a Campus Life Enrichment Committee grant written and received by COE faculty members Regina Rahimi, Ed.D., Kathleen Burke-Fabrikant, Ed.D., and David Owens, Ph.D.

The remaining screening in the series will be “Elementary Genocide” on April 16.

For more information on “The School in the Cloud,” visit: www.theschoolinthecloud.org.

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Georgia Southern's online elementary education master's among top-ranked in nation

March 8, 2019



Georgia Southern University's elementary education program, formerly called the early childhood education program, was recently named one of the best online master's, according to OnlineMasters.com. Of the top 50 programs identified in the nation, the University's M.Ed. in Elementary Education, housed in the Department of Elementary and Special Education of the College of Education, was ranked No. 28 and received the "Best for Professionals" recognition.

"We are proud of this ranking and proud of our program," said M.Ed. Elementary Education Online Option Program Director Katie Brkich, Ph.D. "Faculty work hard to facilitate meaningful interactions and learning experiences in a fully-online program with a range of master's students, from those fresh out of an undergraduate program to working professionals who are veterans in the field."

OnlineMasters.com highlighted the program's in-depth curriculum and field experiences to help current educators improve both their quality of teaching as well as the academic success of students in their classrooms. Education programs at Georgia Southern also include a focus on teaching diverse students and considering social justice issues in the classroom.

"I believe our program was ranked 'Best for Professionals' because our faculty are constantly considering the lives and experiences of our students in designing coursework, due dates and field expectations," Brkich said. "We want full-time teachers to be able to succeed and gain valuable knowledge in the program."

OnlineMasters.com considered three specific areas when ranking national online programs. Academic quality accounted for 40 percent of an institution's grade, including graduation, retention and enrollment rates. Another 40 percent featured student success measures, including polling and assessment of current students and alumni and the quality of instructors. The final 20 percent concentrated on the affordability of an institution.

Methodology for the ranking incorporated the most recent data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System and statistical data from the National Center for Education Statistics. Research

was also conducted through interviews and surveys of current students, alumni and human resource professionals.

For more information about the M.Ed. in Elementary Education program, visit <https://coe.georgiasouthern.edu/mat>.

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