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# COE hosts Scratch Day event for educational professionals

APRIL 28, 2017



GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

Registration for the College of Education's (COE) Scratch Day event is now open.

Scratch Day, set for Saturday, May 13, is a global network of events aimed to give educational professionals the opportunity to explore [Scratch](http://scratch.mit.edu), a free coding platform and online community designed for kids. The event will be held in the Innovation Studio in COE room 3157.

Educational professionals are invited to join instructional technology faculty members Chuck Hodges, Ph.D. and Mete Akcaoglu, Ph.D., for a morning filled with hands-on learning activities centered around Scratch.

"This open house-style event for teachers will focus on sharing and learning about Scratch, a computer coding/programming environment developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and popular in schools around the world," explained Hodges. "Teachers from all different content areas and grade levels have students using Scratch to create stories, games and animations."

The event is open to educational professionals who wish to learn more or share knowledge about Scratch and discover how it can enhance learning opportunities for students. Software and coding experience is not necessary, as Scratch provides an easy to learn platform that can be utilized for all ages.

Attendees are asked to bring their own Wi-Fi enabled device (such as laptop or Chromebook) for the event. The Innovation Studio has limited devices available for use as well. Lunch will be provided following the event.

"Attendees can expect to be fully engaged and doing hands-on work, not watching presentations," said Hodges.

Registration is free, but space is limited. To register for Scratch Day, visit <http://goo.gl/niHMLq>.

Scratch was developed by the Lifelong Kindergarten Group at MIT and encourages creative thinking and reasoning for students to work individually or collaboratively in groups. Scratch is currently

being utilized by students in elementary schools to colleges worldwide. For more information on Scratch, visit <https://scratch.mit.edu/>.

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## Georgia Southern faculty member's research making an impact in education

APRIL 28, 2017



*Jeff Schiman, Ph.D.*

Georgia Southern University College of Business Assistant Professor of economics, Jeff Schiman, Ph.D., was recently mentioned on the National Council on Teacher Quality website in a commentary by Hannah Putman for research he conducted with Ben Ost from the University of Illinois at Chicago on teacher absence rates.

His research focuses on teacher absence rates counting only sick and personal days, not professional development absences, and how these rates correspond to their workloads with consideration to class size and years of experience

The study, using data collected by the North Carolina Education Research Data Center from 1995 to 2007 on elementary teachers in grades PK-5, shows that when faced with higher workloads, teachers are good at showing up to school rather than staying home. The article, published in *Economics of Education Review*, volume 57, April 2017, highlights that teachers are less likely to be absent when teaching larger classes, teaching new grade assignments or having fewer years of experience.

Schiman and Ost also found when a teacher transferred from one school to another, their rate of absence gravitated toward the average for that school, which suggests that school-level factors are important when determining absence rates. The research also shows that teacher absences reduce student performance, suggesting policies reducing absenteeism can improve performance as well as directly cut costs due to lower substitute usage.

It is important to note that the research is based on data from North Carolina, where absence policy is set at the state level; however, the basic structure of North Carolina's absence policy is very similar to that of absence policies in many districts outside of North Carolina.

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