

Erin Sparks Ward

Curriculum Vitae

Department of Psychological Sciences
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Employment

2004-2006	Transportation Safety Research Associate, Civil Engineering, Purdue University
2006-2012	Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of Psychology, Florida State University
2012-2019	Continuing Lecturer, Psychological Sciences, Purdue University
2019-Present	Senior Lecturer, Psychological Sciences, Purdue University

Education

Ph. D., Psychology, Social (2015). Florida State University.

- Dissertation Title: *When Imagining is Believing: Locus of Control Orientation Determines the Impact that Mere Imaginings about the Future Have on Judgments of Other People*

Chair: Dr. Joyce Ehrlinger

M. S., Psychology, Social (2010). Florida State University.

- Thesis Title: *The Cost of Seeking the Best: Maximizing Eliminates Beneficial Dissonance Reduction After Committing to a Choice*

Chair: Dr. Joyce Ehrlinger

B. A., Psychology, Mathematics (2003). University of Chicago, graduated with honors.

Honors and Awards

2022	Inducted into Purdue University Teaching Academy as Associate Fellow
2021	Winner of James C. Naylor Award for Teaching Excellence in Psychology
2020	Co-winner, HHS Patsy J. Mellott Teaching Innovation Award
2019	Nominee, Favorite Faculty Award (Residential Academic Initiatives)

Teaching

Courses Taught

- Stereotyping and Prejudice (in person and online)
- Elementary Psychology Large Lecture (in person and online)
- Social Psychology Large Lecture (in person)
- Discussion sections of PSY 120 Elementary Psychology, Distance Learning/Hybrid Class (in person)
- Research Methods and Statistics Lab Instructor (in person)

Additional Teaching-Related Training and Professional Activities

- Completed the Purdue Impact Access Program in Summer 2020 to redesign courses for effective online pandemic deployment in Fall 2020. The asynchronous online section of Elementary Psychology that Dr. Ward developed was retained in the department's course catalog after other courses returned to in-person deployment.

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- Supervised undergraduate honors contract projects for Elementary Psychology and Stereotyping and Prejudice, 2019-present
 - Supervised over 50 graduate TAs, 2012-present
 - Participated in the Brightspace Competencies and Learning Objectives Spring 2021 Pilot, a project designed to help Purdue use Brightspace to better track the Foundational Learning Outcomes and Embedded Learning Outcomes in the University core courses.
 - 2006-2012 - Served as the direct research supervisor for approximately 60 undergraduates completing a Directed Independent Study in the Florida State University Psychology Department under various faculty members
 - 2011-2012 - Served as the coordinator of the Research Discussion Meetings for the undergraduate research assistants in the Ehrlinger Lab at Florida State University
 - Completed the Florida State University Teaching Practicum, a course offered to graduate students to help them enhance teaching skills
 - Completed the Florida State University Program for Instructional Excellence (PIE). Received PIE certificate with an “excellent” rating for all completed coursework
 - Completed the Florida State University course in “Responsible Conduct of Research and Creative Endeavors”

Teaching Effectiveness

- Feedback from student evaluations, Elementary Psychology Online
 - “The way you set up the online class was amazing. Loved the 5 videos throughout the week with the questions.”*
 - “Your set up should be the golden standard for how to approach online courses”*
 - “The quizzes in the lecture videos helped me to be engaged in the lecture and it was my only class that did this sort of thing. This class was probably the best class I've had at Purdue because of how well it was taught.”*
 - “She should be in charge of teaching professors how to make online classes properly engaging and super educational.”*
- Feedback from student evaluations, Stereotyping and Prejudice
 - “I can't stress enough how wonderful Dr. Ward is... She is so invested in helping us succeed and learn as well. Bravo to her execution of this course, there are definitely many uncomfortable topics and moments, but she made it all go smoothly somehow.*
- Feedback from student evaluations, Elementary Psychology Large Lecture in Person
 - “Erin Wards is one of the best large room lecturers I have had in my couple years at Purdue... always sounding upbeat and excited about the topics at hand which provides a great learning atmosphere for a room of 200+ students*
- Excerpts from Spontaneously Submitted Letter of Appreciation, Co-Signed by 47 online Elementary Psychology Students, Fall 2020:
 - You truly went above and beyond for us in a way that we will never forget. For many of us, you made our first (extremely odd) semester at Purdue University unforgettable... Even though a lot of us came from different, non-psychology backgrounds, your lectures never failed to make us smile and reflect deeply on our prior knowledge... I'm sure we could go on for pages about this class. But to encapsulate everything, we would like to extend a warm thank you for all that you have done for us.*

Research

Research Interests

- Social Judgment
- Judgment and Decision Making
- Decision Making and Well-Being
- Social Cognition
- Stereotyping and Prejudice
- Marketing and Consumer Behavior
- Biases in Psychological Research: Their Origins, Effects, and Solutions

Publications

- Decoster, J., Sparks, E. A., Sparks, J. C., Sparks, G. G., & Sparks, C. W. (2015). Opportunistic biases: Their origins, effects, and an integrated solution. *American Psychologist*, 70(6), 499-514.
- Sparks, E. A., & Ehrlinger, J. (2012). Psychological contributors to the failure to anticipate unintended consequences. *Compass: Social and Personality Psychology*, 6(5), 417-427.
- Sparks, E. A., Ehrlinger, J., & Eibach, R. P. (2012). Failing to commit: Maximizers avoid commitment in a way that contributes to reduced satisfaction. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 52(1), 72-77.
- Sparks, G.G., Sparks, C.W., & Sparks, E.A. (2009). Media violence. In J. Bryant & M.B. Oliver (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (pp. 269-286). Routledge: New York.
- Baumeister, R. F., Sparks, E. A., Stillman, T. F., & Vohs, K. D. (2008). Free will in consumer behavior: Self-control, ego depletion, and choice. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 18, 4-12.
- Sparks, E. A., & Baumeister, R. F. (2008). If bad is stronger than good, why focus on human strength? In S. J. Lopez (Ed.), *Positive psychology: Exploring the best in people* (Vol. 1: Discovering human strengths, pp. 55-79). Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Sparks, E. A. (2007). Satisficing. In K. D. Vohs & R. F. Baumeister (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Social Psychology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Publications in Preparation

- Sparks, G. G., & Sparks Ward, E. (in preparation). *Media effects: A basic overview, 6th edition*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Refereed Conference Presentations

- Sparks, E. A., Ehrlinger, J., & Eibach, R. P. (2012, January) Failing to commit: Maximizers

avoid commitment in a way that contributes to reduced satisfaction. Paper presented at the annual conference for the Society of Personality and Social Psychology, San Diego, California.

Sparks, E. A., Ehrlinger, J., & Eibach, R. P. (2011, March) Failing to commit: Maximizers avoid commitment in a way that contributes to reduced satisfaction. Paper presented at the annual conference for the Southeastern Psychological Association, Jacksonville, FL.

Professional Memberships

Society for the Teaching of Psychology
