

# Can't We Talk? Reflection Opportunities for Instructors of Inquiry Biology Laboratory Courses

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## Extended Abstract

This mini-workshop became a *mini-mini* workshop; the 50 minutes of mini-workshop time was split between this presentation and another one that discussed professional development efforts being made for graduate student science instructors. Therefore, only 25 minutes was spent presenting the content of this workshop. In this mini-workshop, participants were introduced to professional development materials for undergraduate science instructors teaching inquiry biology laboratory courses. *Caselets* are abbreviated case discussions that offer practicing instructors opportunities to actively reflect and discuss teaching dilemmas that commonly occur when teaching science as inquiry. The caselets were presented to participants as instructional development tools that can be used during the limited time often devoted for undergraduate science instructor teacher preparation. However, caselets can also be used in longer teaching development sessions if that time were available.

The topic for this presentation was requested after a mini-workshop I gave last year at on the initial development, use, and assessment of the caselets. Evaluations from that 2011 mini-workshop reflected two points: to present 1) a future major workshop on this topic or 2) at least an updated mini-workshop. In this 2012 mini-workshop, time was spent reviewing a recently developed website for the caselets: [www.teachingcaselets.com](http://www.teachingcaselets.com). Participants reviewed some of the main features of the web site including selective print functions, Inquiry Caselets versus General Teaching Dilemma Caselets, and showcased areas for author biographies. While on the web site, we discussed how topics for the caselets were chosen and the process of actually writing and revising the caselets. Most caselets showcased on the web site were written by graduate student instructors of inquiry laboratory courses. We also discussed how participants and their graduate students could write and submit caselets to the web site. This brought up interesting discussion about benefits of active reflection while teaching; this reflection could be oral (with peers and/or teacher mentors) or written. Finally, our group discussed the most appropriate times to introduce graduate student instructors to the caselets. For example, they could be used with these instructors in a beginning of semester training and orientation session or throughout the semester such that they are timed with parts of a curriculum where teaching dilemmas typically occur. Participants were invited to field test effectiveness in the use of the caselets.

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