

The New Principles of Biology: Access and Inclusion in the Science Lab

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The pandemic helped expose long-standing educational access issues in the sciences. Students with disabilities face barriers to an equitable learning experience, from physical challenges navigating the lab room to vision and hearing impairments that make it hard to follow lectures. Accessible technology can contribute a partial solution, and educational institutions and ed tech companies are working to support learning software that complies with ADA and WCAG 2.1 standards. Yet equity in access to education demands much more than simple compliance. Learners also have differences in socioeconomic status, culture, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality that must be respected. In this session, Hannah Lavendier, Inside Sales Manager at Labster, will moderate a discussion about using technology to enhance student access and engagement. Panelists Laura Rozzi and Mark Mort, both professors from the University of Kansas, will share how their vision to create an accessible, inclusive, and resilient Principles of Biology course led them to develop a new, fully online version of BIOL 102 that has been well-received by students and faculty alike.

Keywords: inclusion, access, introductory biology, technology

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