

Connecting and Supporting TAs online: During the Pandemic and Moving Forward

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During the past year, most laboratory courses were taught fully online or hybrid. Many of these laboratories rely on teaching assistants (TAs) for leading and delivering the content. Once everyone went remote, we needed to change how we connected and supported our TAs. The panel will be discussing how we transitioned training and communication to online or hybrid. We will discuss what worked, what didn't work, and how we would like to continue some of the communications techniques in the future. A first year TA will give insight into her experience as a teaching assistant during the pandemic and describe how she felt communication and support was during the pandemic including interactions with students and TAs with disabilities. Panelists will then share their professional development modules developed for online, both asynchronous and synchronous. These programs were developed before the pandemic but are examples of what could be done as we continue in hybrid or online for TAs. Finally, we will open up the discussion for participants to share their experiences working with TAs during these challenging times and discuss future pathways to continue the communication and support for online courses or implementing techniques once back in person.

Panelist Information:

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Education Preceptor

Deborah A. Lichti

Deborah have worked for the past two years as an education preceptor helping to connect the content between labs and lecture for students in our integrated biology and chemistry course. I am a BioTAP (Biology Teaching Assistant Project) scholar interested in developing professional development and a community for all teaching assistants in our program.

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Teaching future faculty development through CIRTL

Nancy G. Abney

Nancy G. Abney oversees TA and future faculty training through UAB's CIRTL Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching & Learning and teaches Professional Skills for the Graduate School and Office of Postdoctoral Education at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. A 20 year veteran of teaching professional skills in graduate education, Nancy has established herself as a transformational educator specializing in online course design, blended/hybrid and experiential learning.

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Postdoctoral Associate, Instructor

Frank R. Castelli

Frank R. Castelli is a Cornell CALS Active Learning Initiative educational research postdoc and co-instructor of a large intro bio lab course. He helps train 12 graduate TAs and 13+ undergraduate TAs each semester and has in-person and remote experience.

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PhD Student
Katie Coscia

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Biology Education Research Specialist
Amy Kulesza

Amy has expertise in assessment and evaluation, instrument development and use, and data analysis in biology education research. Amy currently serves as the instructor for the CLSE's Biology TA professional development course.

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Preceptor
Jordan Mohr

I am the preceptor for honors integrated biology and chemistry where I work to connect lecture and lab content for honors freshman students. I work with faculty, lab staff, and TAs to design and implement learning labs and to monitor and evaluate student performance in our course.

Mission, Review Process & Disclaimer

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