

BioCaoaches

BIOL 369-006: Cooperative Education in Biology

Learning Assistant Co-Op

INSTRUCTOR

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Co-Op Teaching Experience. *Student internship or cooperative (co-op) education at the collegiate level provides or facilitates an engaging experience external to the opportunities available on a university/college campus. In an effort to provide structure and formalize BIOL 369 for a broad variety of co-op experiences, the Department of Biology will deal with internships in the following manner: A co-op experience is categorized as an Experiential, **Teaching**, or Academic Internship prior to enrollment and after a discussion with the student seeking the co-op. A faculty member advises the project and evaluates the student's work. An on-site supervisor would provide one aspect of the evaluation of student performance and be the contact person for the faculty advisor.*

What are Learning Assistants (LAs)? “BioCoaches”

Learning Assistants are talented undergraduate students, primarily in mathematics and the sciences, chosen for their broad interest in teaching and prepared to provide support for student learning in interactive classroom environments. Primarily used in group work, LAs focus on student ideas and facilitate group conversations and conceptual understanding. LAs are chosen from the top students who took the course in previous semesters and receive a stipend or class credit for their assistance.^{[1](#)}

Course Objectives

- Learning Assistants (LAs) will interact with students by facilitating discussions about conceptual problems within the discipline.
- LAs will focus mainly on eliciting student thinking and helping each student participate in developing a shared understanding.
- LAs will meet with each other and/or their faculty mentor as a team to prepare for future classes, develop deeper content understanding, and exchange information about how students are progressing in the course.
- LAs will be introduced to educational research, active learning, and strategies that support: (1) eliciting student ideas and helping all group members become active and engaged in the class. (2) listening and questioning; (3) building relationships; and (4) integrating learning theories with effective practices.

Grading: 225 Total Points

1. Internship Form = 10 points
2. Attend Group Meetings = 20 points
3. In-class Work Sessions = 80 points
4. Out-of-class Study Sessions = 50 points
5. Entries in LogBook = 50 points
6. Online Reflection Survey = 25 points

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Learning Assistant Literature Review

- Finkelstein, N., Otero, V., & Pollock, S. (2006). Teaching to learn: The Colorado Learning Assistant program's impact on learning content. *American Physical Society Forum on Education Newsletter, Fall 2006/Spring 2007*, 11-13 (A brief description of the Colorado Learning Assistant program, as well as its impacts on student learning)
- Gray, K. & Otero, V. (2008). Analysis of Learning Assistant's Views of Teaching and Learning. McCullough, J. Hsu & P. Heron, (Eds.) *2008 Physics Education Research Conference Proceedings*. Melville, NY: AIP Press. (Description of the Colorado Learning Assistant program, and its impacts on the evolution of the LAs as teachers.)
- Gray, K.E. and Otero, V.K., (2009) "Analysis of Former Learning Assistants' Views on Cooperative Learning" PERC Proceedings 2009, AIP Press. PDF. (Description on how former LAs views of teaching and learning as a cooperative activity compare to teachers who were not LAs.)
- Otero, V. (2006). The Learning Assistant model for teacher preparation in science and technology. *American Physical Society Forum on Education Newsletter, Summer 2006*, 31-35. (Describes the impact of the Colorado Learning Assistant program on teacher recruitment and attitudes.)
- Otero, V., Finkelstein, N., McCray, R., & Pollock, S. (2006). Who is responsible for preparing science teachers? *Science*, 313(5786), 445-446. (Makes the case that, in order to produce high-quality science teachers, students themselves must be involved in teaching and learning (as in the Colorado Learning Assistant program)).

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IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Attendance: The faculty and staff of Ogden College of Science and Engineering are committed to providing you with learning experiences and opportunities. You must assume ownership of your education and be an active participant in the classroom and laboratory to take advantage of these opportunities. Active participation requires you to attend. Scientific studies have shown that attendance during scheduled classroom and laboratory meetings is directly correlated to your performance on assignments and exams and the potential to earn higher grades. Additionally, if you do not regularly attend class, you are missing important information about course topics, due dates, and assignment details that are crucial to your success in the course. Therefore, as a student enrolled in an Ogden course, you are expected to attend every class meeting and to inform your instructor regarding the reasons for any absences as soon as practical. Your instructor may incorporate class attendance/participation as part of the grading criteria.

Student Accessibility: In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, room 1074 of the Student Success Center. The phone number is 270.745.5004. or email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

Academic Integrity & Student Conduct: Academic Integrity & Student Conduct: Cheating/academic dishonesty in any form (plagiarism, altering exams, crib sheets, cell phone usage, etc.) is not tolerated. Student behavior or speech that disrupts the instructional setting or is clearly disrespectful to the instructor or fellow students will not be tolerated. Violations will result in dismissal from the course with a grade of 'F', and this policy will be strongly enforced.

Disruptive conduct or breeches in academic integrity may include but are not limited to:

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| 1. Rude or disrespectful behavior | 6. Inappropriate questions or advances toward your instructor or other students |
| 2. Unwarranted interruptions | 7. Failure to work with your lab group |
| 3. Failure to adhere to instructor's directions | 8. Fraudulent notes or excuses from professionals |
| 4. Vulgar or obscene language, slurs, or other forms of intimidation | |
| 5. Physically or verbally abusive behavior | |

Such conduct or actions will also result in disciplinary action as specified in the WKU Code of Conduct.

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination & Harassment: Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff, and students by upholding WKU's Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy (#0.2070) at <https://www.wku.edu/policies/docs/182.pdf> and Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040) at <https://www.wku.edu/policies/docs/251.pdf>. Under these policies, discrimination, harassment, and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.

The Learning Center (TLC): The Learning Center (DSU 2141) provides free supplemental education programs for all currently enrolled WKU students. TLC offers CRLA Certified, one-on-one tutoring by appointment or walk-in. TLC also provides quiet study area, with side rooms designated for peer to peer tutoring, and offers a computer lab. For more information, or to schedule a tutoring appointment, please call TLC at (270) 745 - 5065 or log on to the website at <https://www.wku.edu/tlc>.

Food Insecurity: Food insecurity is defined as a condition where persons, in this case students, do not have adequate resources to feed themselves, either nutritiously or not at all (USDA, 2013). According to a recent national study (Hunger on Campus, 2016), food insecurity is common at colleges and universities across the country, potentially undermining the educational success of untold thousands of students. If food insecurity is an issue for you or someone you know, help is readily available. Contact the WKU Office of Sustainability at (270) 745-2508 or email sustainability@wku.edu or visit starvingtolearn.com.

For more important guidelines, policies and resources, visit: <https://www.wku.edu/syllabusinfo/index.php>.

¹Science education resource Center at Carleton College (<https://serc.carleton.edu/49018>)