Much like using videos to flip the classroom for students (1), flipping the training for teaching assistants can have similar benefits. With little more than a smart phone and free or inexpensive video editing software, a repository of subject-matter expert content can be created to provide teaching assistants a resource that will enable them to offer undergraduates a high quality educational experience.

Video access/benefits

The videos are made available via the university’s learning management system. The teaching assistants are encouraged to view the video while actively investigating the actual materials in the lab setting. The videos may be viewed at the teaching assistants’ convenience and as many times as necessary to gain a complete understanding of the information in order to comprehensively both instruct and guide the introductory biology students during the laboratory activity.

Pedagogical content

Both the fossil record and the vertebrate morphology sections of the lab are based on, and encompass, an extensive range of background information which supports the lab activity. In most cases, a teaching assistant hasn’t yet acquired the volume of knowledge necessary for a comprehensive presentation to introductory biology lab students.

References


Acknowledgments

*The lab was adapted in part from Brian White, Umass Boston, Biology 112 Lab Manual
• A special thank you to Dr. Brady Porter for his expertise and to the instructors and teaching assistants who participated in the filming of the video