**Course Learning Objectives:**

In addition to traditional objectives covering the Physical and Chemical Basis of Life, The Molecular Basis of Regulation, Plant Biology, Animal Biology, and Experimental Biology, this course also covers:

1. Exploring biological information sources to answer a personal question
2. Developing a personal strategy to find information needed for a biological problem (skill)
3. Modifying strategies for finding information by reflecting and then deciding how to improve a strategy
4. Reflecting on the quality of biological information you find and evaluate how useful it is for your question
5. Finding and interpreting biological examples to illustrate what you have learned to a specific audience
6. Using biological information to respond to ideas presented by others or biological issues of social relevance

**Weekly Assignments and Reflections**

Students developed a personal strategy to find information needed for a biological problem and considered personal and social relevance of biological information through an informed learning approach.

**Student Benefits from the Six Frames of Informed Learning**

- Students develop a personally relevant question that can be answered by engaging biological information.
- Informed learning approaches help students consider personal and social relevance of biological information.
- PLs develop leadership, instructional and observational/listening skills as well as biological expertise and confidence.

**Goals and Intended Outcomes**

- Vision and Change (AAAS, 2011) calls for making undergraduate courses more student-centered and relevant.
- To make the learning in a biology course for first-year undergraduate students as inclusive as possible for students from a range of backgrounds and interests, we:
  - Introduced the practices that "inform" biology professionals
  - Explicitly addressed the potential for students to inform themselves in a biology course.

**Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL)**

- Information literacy assignments were added to the weekly problem sets
- Emphasizing the social aspects of learning, students worked together in small groups led by a peer mentor using online or face-to-face meetings.
- Peer leaders (PLs: undergraduates & a grad TA) were recruited and trained
- PLs led weekly small-group sessions to work through problem sets and projects
- Students considered personal and social relevance of biological information through an informed learning approach
- Students explored biological information sources to answer a personal question
- Students developed a personal strategy to find information needed for a biological problem (skill)
- Students modified strategies for finding information by reflecting and then deciding how to improve a strategy

**Why are we doing this?**

The role of personal relevance in developing biological information literacy

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