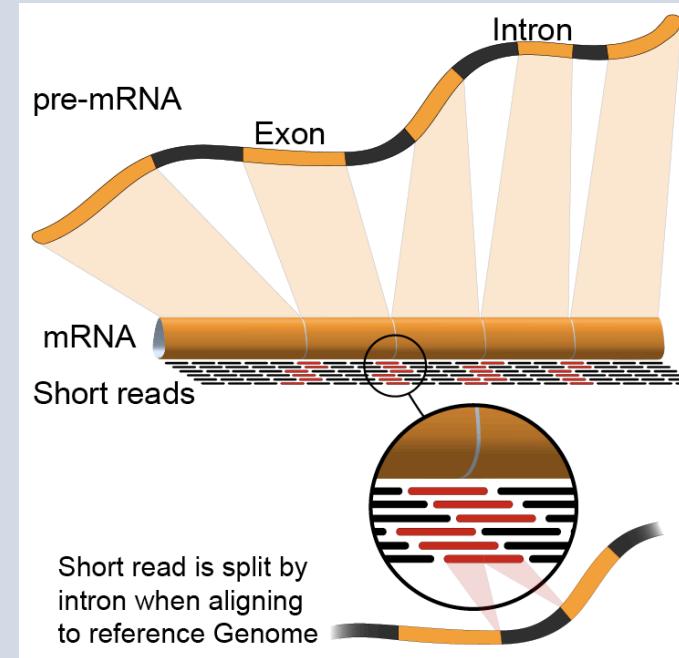
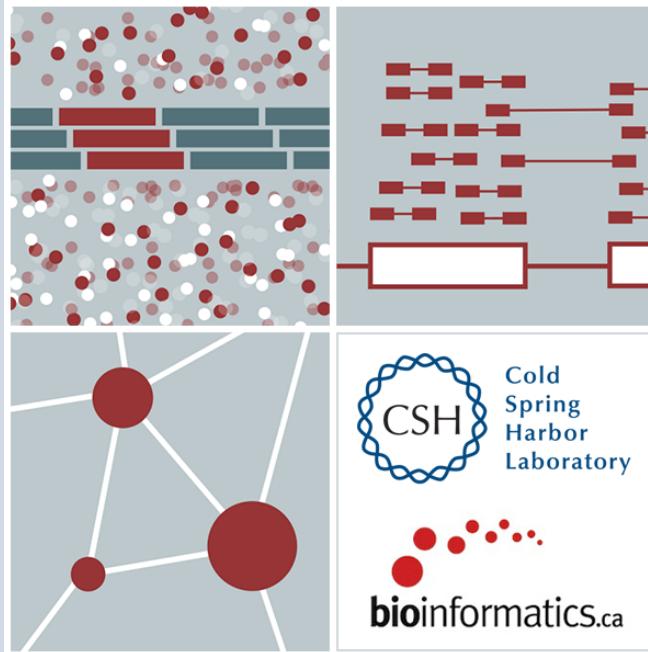




Cold  
Spring  
Harbor  
Laboratory

# Introduction to RNA sequencing (lecture)

Kelsy Cotto, Arpad Danos, Harriet Dashnow, Felicia Gomez, Sharon Freshour, Obi Griffith,  
Malachi Griffith, Jason Kunisaki, Chris Miller, Jonathan Preall, Aaron Quinlan  
Advanced Sequencing Technologies & Bioinformatics Analysis November 11-19, 2021



Washington University in St. Louis  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

# Learning objectives of the course

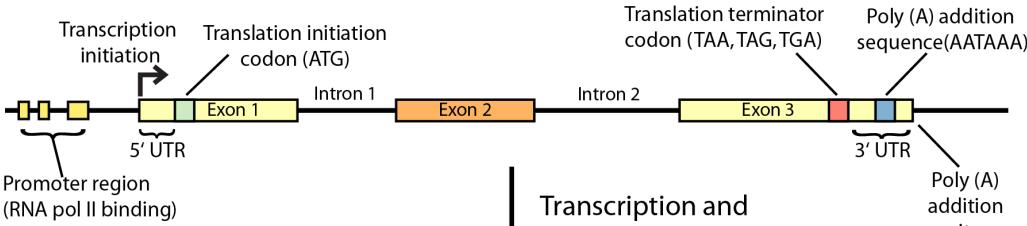
- **Module 1: Introduction to RNA Sequencing**
- Module 2: Alignment and Visualization
- Module 3: Expression and Differential Expression
- Module 4: Alignment Free Expression Estimation
- Module 5: Single Cell RNA-Seq
- Tutorials
  - Provide a working example of an RNA-seq analysis pipeline
  - Run in a ‘reasonable’ amount of time with modest computer resources
  - Self contained, self explanatory, portable

# Learning objectives of module 1

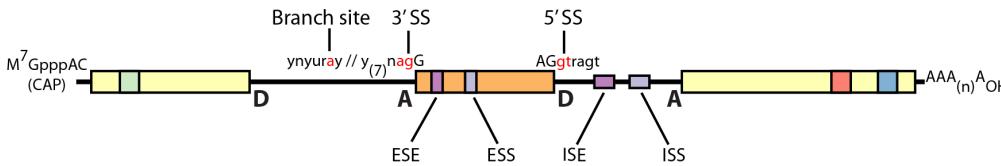
- Introduction to the theory and practice of RNA sequencing (RNA-seq) analysis
  - Rationale for sequencing RNA
  - Challenges specific to RNA-seq
  - General goals and themes of RNA-seq analysis work flows
  - Common technical questions related to RNA-seq analysis
  - Introduction to the RNA-seq hands on tutorial

# Gene expression

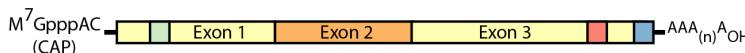
## Double-stranded genomic DNA template



## Single-stranded pre-mRNA (nuclear RNA)



## Mature mRNA

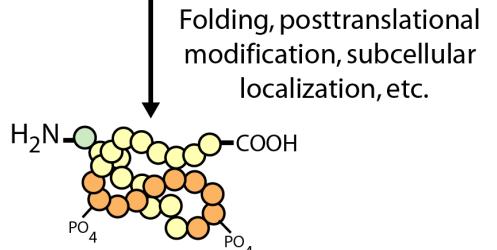


## RNA processing

## Protein (amino acid sequence)

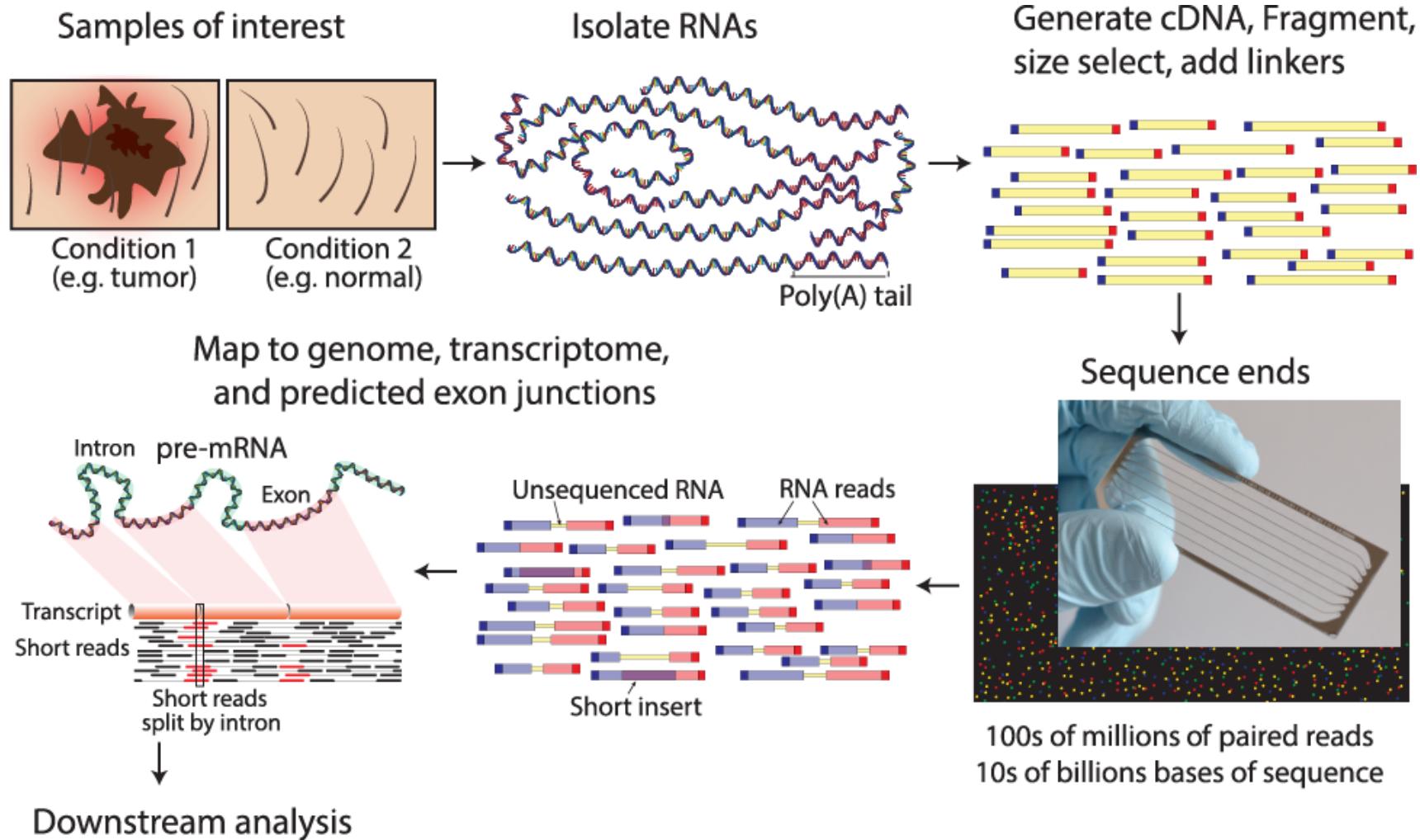


## Export to cytoplasm and translation



Folding, posttranslational modification, subcellular localization, etc.

# RNA sequencing

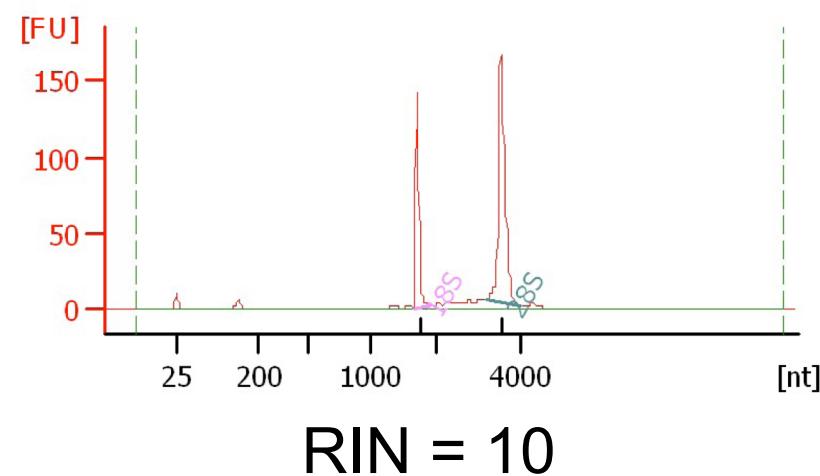
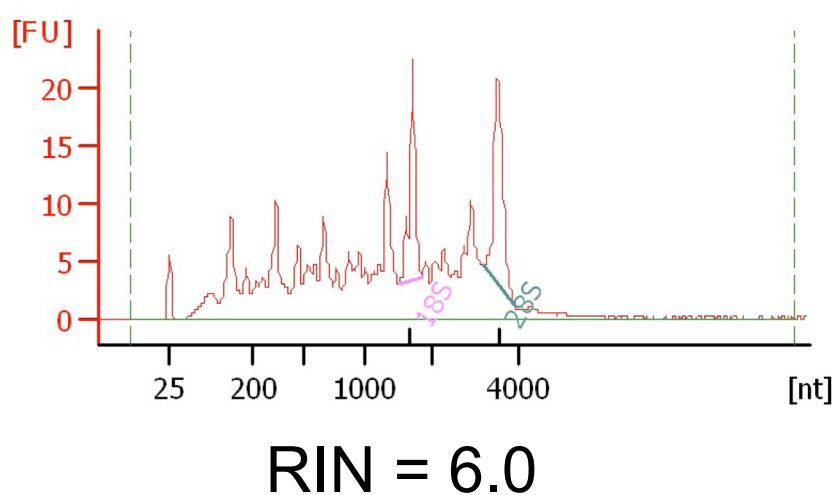


# Challenges

- Sample
  - Purity?, quantity?, quality?
- RNAs consist of small exons that may be separated by large introns
  - Mapping reads to genome is challenging
- The relative abundance of RNAs vary wildly
  - $10^5$  –  $10^7$  orders of magnitude
  - Since RNA sequencing works by random sampling, a small fraction of highly expressed genes may consume the majority of reads
  - Ribosomal and mitochondrial genes
- RNAs come in a wide range of sizes
  - Small RNAs must be captured separately
  - PolyA selection of large RNAs may result in 3' end bias
- RNA is fragile compared to DNA (easily degraded)

# Agilent example / interpretation

- <https://goo.gl/uC5a3C>
- ‘RIN’ = RNA integrity number
  - 0 (bad) to 10 (good)



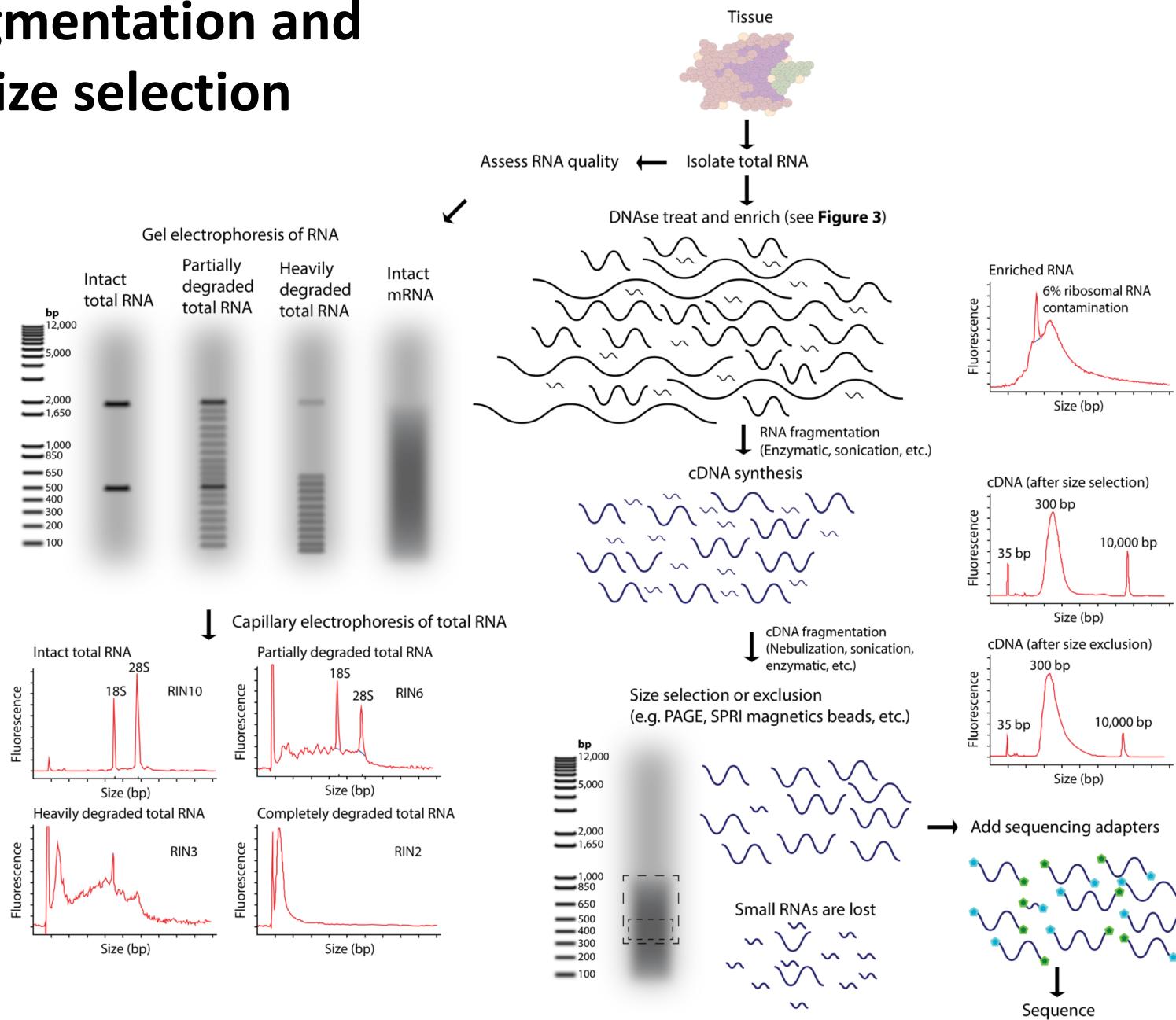
# Design considerations

- Standards, Guidelines and Best Practices for RNA-seq
  - The ENCODE Consortium
  - Download from the Course Wiki
  - Meta data to supply, replicates, sequencing depth, control experiments, reporting standards, etc.
- <https://goo.gl/6LePBW>
- Several additional initiatives are underway to develop standards and best practices that cover many of these concepts. These include: the Sequencing Quality Control (SEQC) consortium, the Roadmap Epigenomics Mapping Consortium (REMC), and the Beta Cell Biology Consortium (BCBC).

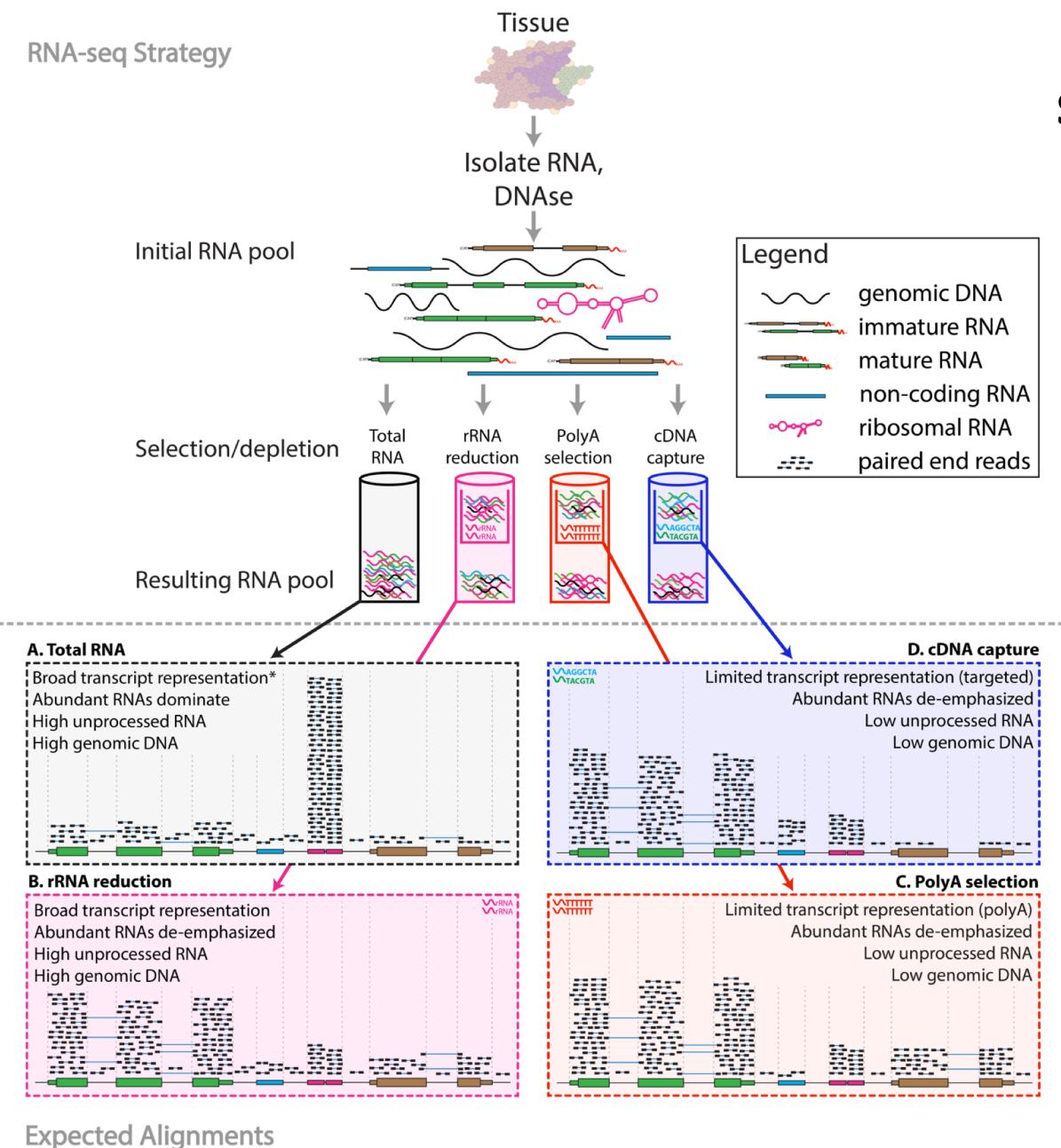
# There are many RNA-seq library construction strategies

- Total RNA versus polyA+ RNA?
- Ribo-reduction?
- Size selection (before and/or after cDNA synthesis)
  - Small RNAs (microRNAs) vs. large RNAs?
  - A narrow fragment size distribution vs. a broad one?
- Linear amplification?
- Stranded vs. un-stranded libraries
- Exome captured vs. un-captured
- Library normalization?
  - These details can affect analysis strategy
    - Especially comparisons between libraries

# Fragmentation and size selection

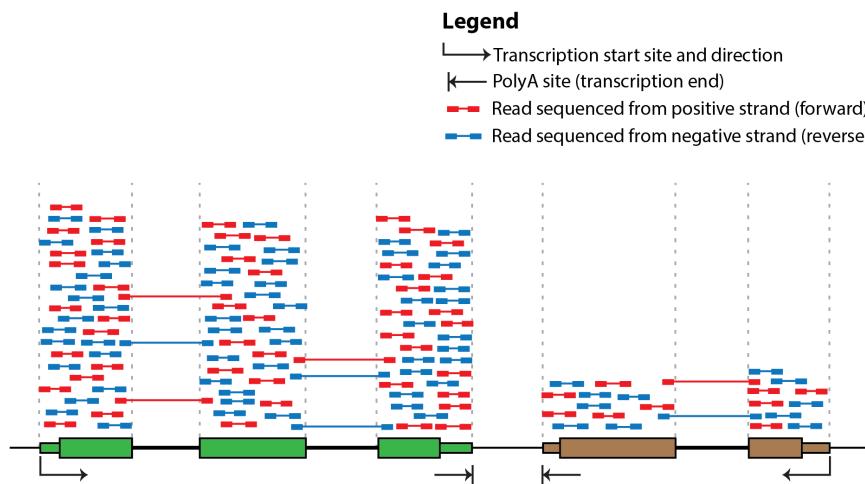


# RNA sequence selection/depletion

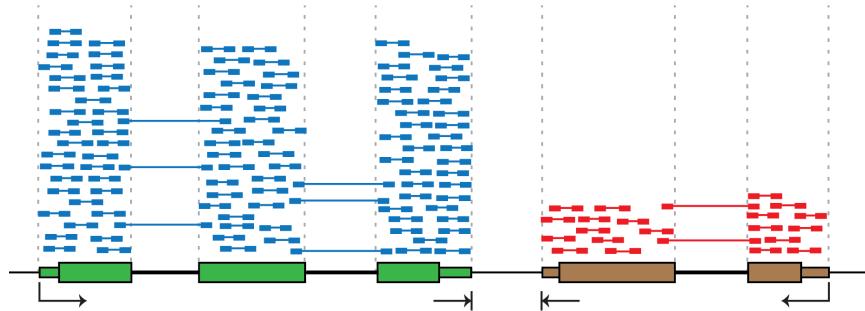


# Stranded vs. unstranded

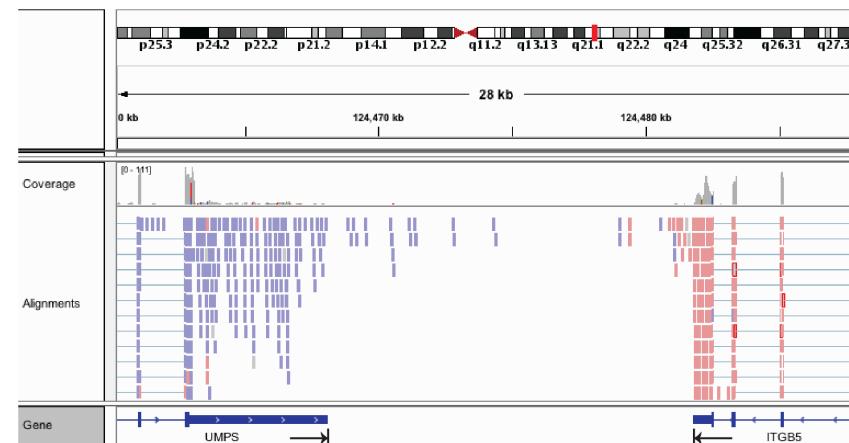
## A. Depiction of cDNA fragments from an unstranded library



## B. Depiction of cDNA fragments from an stranded library

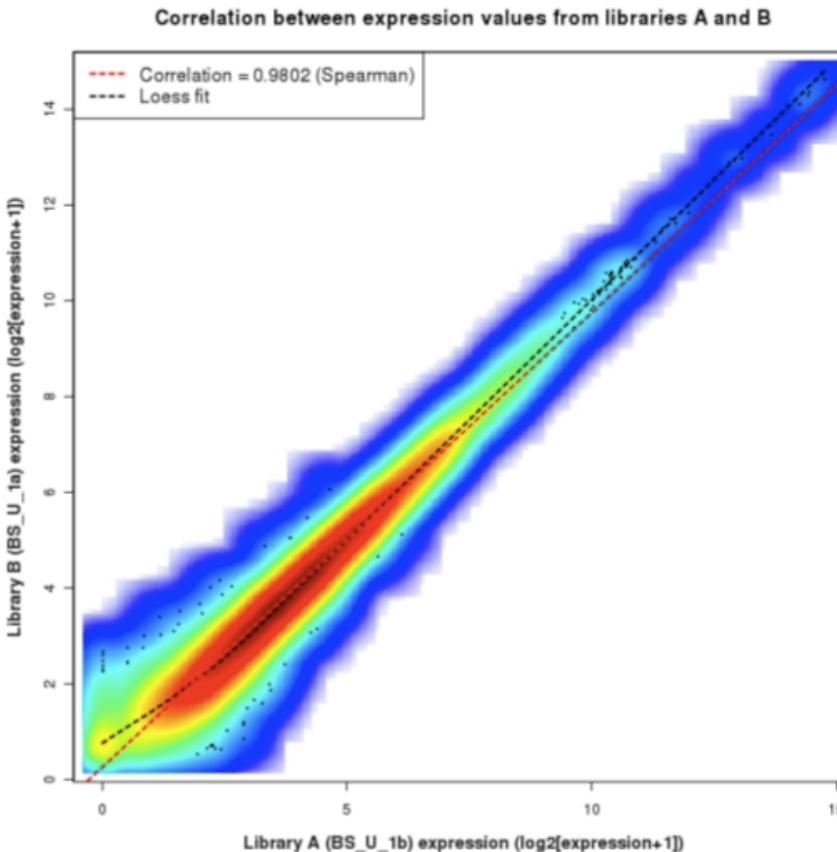


## C. Viewing strand of aligned reads in IGV



# Replicates

- Technical Replicate
  - Multiple instances of sequence generation
    - Flow Cells, Lanes, Indexes
- Biological Replicate
  - Multiple isolations of cells showing the same phenotype, stage or other experimental condition
  - Some example concerns/challenges:
    - Environmental Factors, Growth Conditions, Time
  - Correlation Coefficient 0.92-0.98



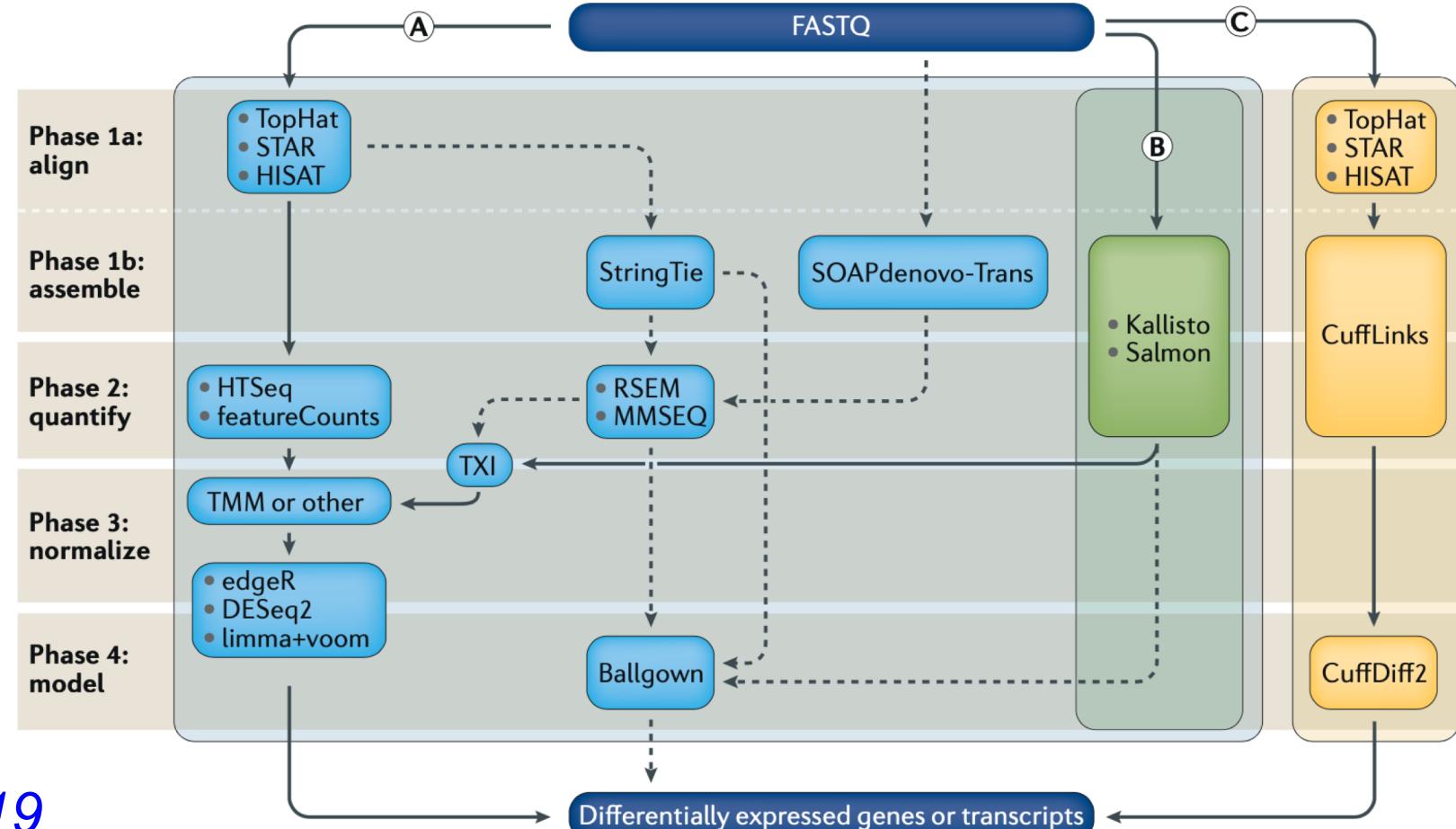
# Common analysis goals of RNA-Seq analysis (what can you ask of the data?)

- Gene expression and differential expression
- Alternative expression analysis
- Transcript discovery and annotation
- Allele specific expression
  - Relating to SNPs or mutations
- Mutation discovery
- Fusion detection
- RNA editing

# General themes of RNA-seq workflows

- Each type of RNA-seq analysis has distinct requirements and challenges but also a common theme:
  1. Obtain raw data (convert format)
  2. Align/assemble reads
  3. Process alignment with a tool specific to the goal
    - e.g. ‘cufflinks’ for expression analysis, ‘defuse’ for fusion detection, etc.
  4. Post process
    - Import into downstream software (R, Matlab, Cytoscape, Ingenuity, etc.)
  5. Summarize and visualize
    - Create gene lists, prioritize candidates for validation, etc.

# Examples of RNA-seq data analysis workflows for differential gene expression



[Stark et al. 2019](#)

# Common questions (and answers)

- [Supplementary Table 7](#)
- Malachi Griffith\*, Jason R. Walker, Nicholas C. Spies, Benjamin J. Ainscough, Obi L. Griffith\*. 2015. Informatics for RNA-seq: A web resource for analysis on the cloud. 11(8):e1004393. 2015.
  - <http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/article?id=10.1371/journal.pcbi.1004393>

# **Introduction to tutorial (Module 1)**

# HISAT2/StringTie/Ballgown RNA-seq Pipeline

