

Varun Venkatesh – Teaching transcript

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Education

2013 – present Doctor of Philosophy in Biomedical Sciences (Expected completion 2018)

2009 – 2012 Bachelor of Biomedical Science with Honours (First Class)

Teaching experience

Teaching Fellow (Lecturer) 114 - Animal Biology (Neurobiology)

February 2017- present

Taught the neurobiology section of biology 114, an undergraduate course averaging over 300 students per semester. Developed a new neurobiology lab surrounding the effect of nicotine on cricket neuronal function. Developed quizzes, exams, and homework

Teaching Fellow (Lecturer) 244 – Biochemistry (Carbohydrate metabolism)

February 2017- July 2017

Taught the carbohydrate metabolism section of Biochemistry 244, an undergraduate course averaging over 300 students per semester. Developed quizzes, exams, and a new lab with the guidance of Dr Paul Teesdale Spittle. Coordinated grading and labs with a team of 6 teaching assistants

Teaching Assistant Biology 243 - Physiology and Pharmacology

July 2012 - November 2012, August 2018 - present

During this course I was a demonstrator for Biology 243 Physiology and Pharmacology. During this lab I worked with Professor John Miller and Dr Bronwyn Kivell to teach students lab skills and concepts in physiology. The techniques taught in this lab include basic hematology, human spirometry and electrocardiograms. I also helped run the lab by organizing and sectioning tissue for the lab using a cryomicrotome.

Teaching Assistant Biology 111 at Victoria University of Wellington

March 2013 - June 2013, July 2018 - present

During this course I was the lead demonstrator for Biology 111, an introduction to biological chemistry, cell ultrastructure and metabolism, cell division and development. During the labs I was tasked with introducing the labs and supervising the students in a range of laboratory experiments as well as managing the demonstrators. This role also included identifying and mitigating risks in the lab and ensuring safety and compliance of the students.

Teaching Assistant Biology 340 – Genes and Genomes

March 2015 - Present

During this period, I was a teaching assistant for Biology 340. This course involved teaching 3 labs focusing around common and advanced PCR techniques. This included, RT-PCR, emulsion PCR and asymmetric PCR. This taught me how to relay complex ideas to students. Additionally, I helped develop aspects of the lab.

Teaching Assistant Biology 339 - Cellular Regulation

September 2013 - Present

During this period, I was a teaching assistant for Dr Darren Day and Dr Lifeng Peng for the course Biology 339 Cellular Regulation. During this course not only did I teach SDS-PAGE electrophoresis and q-RT PCR. I also helped Dr Day to design and optimize the lab protocol as well as performing other organizational tasks in the lab such as marking and collation of results as well managing the lab in the absence of Dr Day. This lab assisted me in gaining a greater understanding of how a lab is designed and run.

Teaching Assistant Biology 335 - Advanced Physiology

September 2012 - October 2013

I taught this course for two trimesters. During this course I was tasked with demonstrating concepts involved in advanced physiology. The techniques in this course included immunohistochemistry, electroencephalograms and electrocardiograms as well as other physiological assays. I was required to trouble shoot the equipment in the course as well as explain advanced physiological concepts to students.

Teaching Assistant Biology 114 - Animal Biology

July 2013 - October 2013

During this role I was a demonstrator for Biology 114 introduction to animal structure and function. This involved teaching microscopy techniques as well as numerous dissections on a variety of organs. This 100-level course was highly beneficial to me in that it was the first interaction I had with first year students in a lab environment and allowed me to develop strong skills in encouraging and nurturing younger students.

Teaching Assistant Biology 116 - Human Sexuality, reproduction & Evolution

March 2012 - June 2013

For two trimesters I was a demonstrator for 116 Human evolution, reproduction and sexuality. This involved planning tutorials and leading them as well as in my second round of demonstration I was the lead demonstrator. In the lead demonstrator capacity, I organized tutorials, updated blackboard and fielded student queries.

Teaching Assistant Biology 243 - Physiology and Pharmacology

July 2012 - November 2012, August 2018 -

During this course I was a demonstrator for Biology 243 Physiology and Pharmacology. During this lab I worked with Professor John Miller and Dr Bronwyn Kivell to teach students lab skills and concepts in physiology. The techniques taught in this lab include basic hematology, human spirometry and electrocardiograms.

Representative and club roles

Co-founder of the School of Biological Sciences Coding club

January 2016 - December 2017

In this position I identified a significant need in the Victoria University School of Biological Sciences for a student lead group that could self-teach bioinformatics for use in our own research. This involved me leasing with experienced bioinformatician, Dr Jeremy Owen to develop a loose curriculum and tool box of teaching tools to give novice bioinformaticians and way to start learning. I then tested these resources on myself before helping other students with them.

Student representative on the School of Biological Sciences Research Committee at Victoria University of Wellington

June 2013 - September 2014

In this role I facilitate the communication between students and members of the research committee regarding issues surrounding research at The Victoria University Wellington School of Biological Sciences. During this time, I also presented ideas relating to the improvement of postgraduate success including proposing the implementation of a mentoring programme.

Postgraduate Representative at Science Society Victoria University

January 2012 - 2013

Represented science postgraduate students at the Science Society. In addition, helped organize and facilitate science related events including study sessions and visitor talks.

Referees

Dr Diane Ormsby – Lecturing/teaching mentor

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Dr Fabian Westermann – Senior Tutor

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