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ALISON LEIGH BANKA, PH.D.

Alison Banka is a lecturer in the School of Chemical, Materials, and Biomedical Engineering within the College of Engineering and has been with UGA since 2022. She teaches a variety of courses, including laboratory courses (BCHE 3180L and 4180L), a core biochemical engineering design course (BCHE 2910), and an elective on biopharmaceutical engineering (BCHE 4600/6600). She revamped a core course for biochemical and biological engineers, BCHE 3520 (Mass Transport and Rate Phenomena), during ALSI in 2023.

I AM EXCITED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT...

Alternative grading (aka, ensuring our systems of grading align with what students have learned), backward design, growth mindset, and incorporating professional skills development into classes.

MOST USED ACTIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES

TiLT, backward design, feedback-only and ungraded activities and assessments

BIGGEST SURPRISE IN YOUR COURSE REDESIGN

How I could raise the bar for student learning expectations and have them match it with an altered course (and grading) structure and well-planned use of class time.

GREATEST TRIUMPH IN ACTIVE LEARNING & COURSE REDESIGN

One of the courses I teach went from being dreaded to being one students enjoy AND learn a lot during.

WORDS OF WISDOM

Find an accountability buddy (or buddies) to bounce ideas off of informally and to check in with regularly—having like-minded people to talk challenges over with has been invaluable!

MOST MEANINGFUL ACTIVE LEARNING MEMORY

In 2024, one of my colleagues (Ben Fahrman) and I applied for and received the Active Learning Change Grant, which allowed us to put on teaching/active learning workshops in the College of Engineering and mentor engineering faculty as they redesigned aspects of their courses.

ADVICE FOR OVERCOMING ROADBLOCKS

Just as we should aim for students' continual improvement, we should aim for the same with ourselves. Will everything work 'correctly' the first time around? Absolutely not. Can we at least make incremental, positive changes each semester? Absolutely yes. A growth mindset is essential for us, too!