



# Training Series for Peer Mentors

How to View and Use a New Resource from ThinkCollege

Megan Goldfarb, with Seb Prohn, Ph.D.

Thursday, April 19, 2018

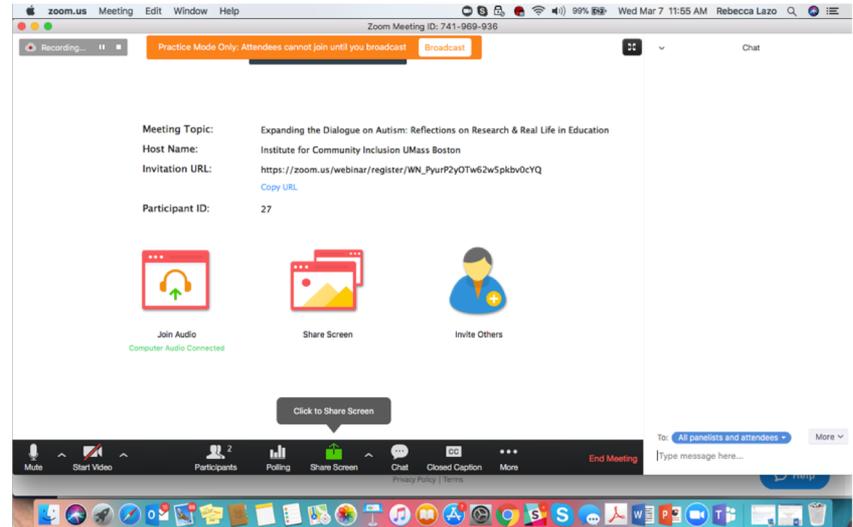


ThinkCollege

**NATIONAL COORDINATING CENTER**

# Helpful Tips for Using Zoom

- As participants, you are automatically muted. You are not on camera.
- The black bar at the bottom (or sometimes top) of your screen is your control panel.
- If it is not already showing, you can click on Chat to make the chat pod show up.
- Select “All panelists & attendees” as the option under “To” so your questions & comments show up for all to see.



Live captioning of today's event is available here: <https://www.streamtext.net/player?event=ICI>



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# Megan Goldfarb

Academic Support at Virginia  
Commonwealth University

- Painting & Printmaking major,  
English minor, graduating in May
- 2nd-year academic support at VCU
- Have worked with 8 different  
students over 4 semesters



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# Academic Support Role at VCU



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# VCU ACE-IT in College



- 4 semester
- CTP; VCU School of Education Certificate
- Inclusive- college classes, facilities, graduation
- Employment driven- paid campus employment and community internships
- Individualized
- Close partnership with VR and VDOE



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# Employment Support Specialists

- Support for learning new tasks in jobs and internships
- Provide ongoing feedback
- Acquiring and maintaining campus employment
- Communication
- Aim to fade to job independence



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# Natural Supports

- Paid and unpaid VCU students of approximately the same age as PSE students who intervene as necessary to facilitate inclusive participation in academic, social and recreational activities.



# Rationale for Natural Support

- NTACT lists peer academic support as a research based practice for educational outcomes
- All college students benefit from inclusive interactions
- Inclusion begets inclusion (Siperstein et al., 2017)
- Non-peer paraprofessionals can have damaging consequences for PSE students' social participation and inclusion (Broer, Doyle, & Giangreco, 2005)



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# Support Types

## Peer Support

- VCU student
- Volunteer
- Recruited from honors societies, departments and classes- service learning
- Social or supplemental activities
- Single training
- Clubs, gym, movies, community activities

## Academic Supports/Ed Coaches

- VCU student
- Paid RRTC employee
- Posting in VCU Jobs
- Educational and academic support
- Repeated training 2-4x a year
- Class and student reserved study areas



# Academic Support Duties & Expectations

- Individualized academic support in the areas of
  - Planning
  - Organization
  - Participation
  - Self-advocacy
  - Modeling behaviors and characteristics of successful college students



# Sample Training Topics

- Behavior
  - Understanding
  - Reinforcing positive behavior
  - Replacing challenging behaviors
- Accommodation/modification
- Assistive technology
- Attention
- Task analysis
- Shared successful practices and strategies



# Video Resource Series for Peer Supports

- Peer supports may not have experience working with peers who have ID
- New peer supports come in and graduate often
- Videos serve as a **training tool**, offering strategies that academic peer supports can use with the students they work with.



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# Feedback from VCU Academic Supports

“I greatly appreciated her language when speaking about herself and her interactions with students she works with by not exclusively/consistently segmenting herself and the individual she was working with as an ed coach and student, but referencing them collectively as peers/supporting a peer. This is a shift I’d like to incorporate into my own language and understanding of my role.”



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# Video 1:

“Supporting Students With Intellectual Disabilities: What we do and why we do it”



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# “Supporting Students With Intellectual Disabilities: What we do and why we do it”

- An overview of what being an academic support means and values behind the support position
- Details what peer mentors do to support their classmates
- Qualities of an academic support
- Long-term impact of a peer mentor’s role
- External resources to consult



## Video excerpt

### **Group Discussions / Group Work**

- Discussions with peers or the professor, as a class or in small groups
- Preparing thoughts and sharing them with classmates



# Video 2:

“Task Analysis and Academic Mentoring: Strategies and tips for breaking things down”



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# “Task Analysis and Academic Mentoring: Strategies and tips for breaking things down”

- Focus: Ways to use task analysis with students to increase independence
- Emphasis on breaking down instructions for individual needs
- Examples provided: flashcard studying and reading strategies
- Includes tips for applying task analysis strategies



## Video Excerpt

Task Analysis In Use



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# Video 3:

“Adapting to Individual Student Needs:  
A Case Study”



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# “Adapting to Individual Student Needs: A Case Study”

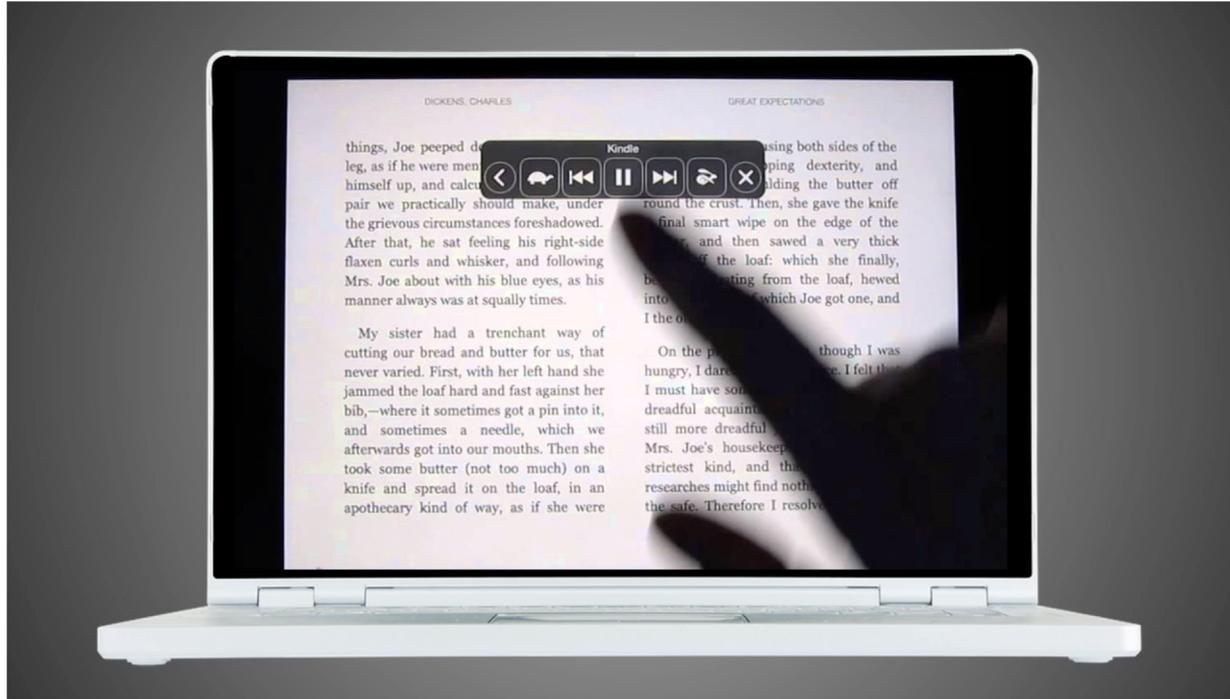
- Presents experiences working with three peers who had very different needs
- First student: Focus on organizational strategies
- Second student: Focus on class participation
- Third student: Focus on reading and writing strategies



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## Video Excerpt



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# Video 4:

“Writing Papers: Tips and tricks for working with students”



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# “Writing Papers: Tips and tricks for working with students”

- Focus: Strategies for supporting students as they write papers for classes
- Strategies addressed:
  - Breaking the writing prompt down & putting it into familiar language
  - Facilitating brainstorming
  - Getting thoughts down in writing
  - Working with students who have difficulty with reading and writing



## Video Excerpt



You might find yourself helping students begin to transfer their thoughts about class material into written responses.



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# Anecdotes



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# Future of Academic Support Videos

*What other topics should be addressed?*

- Study techniques
- Note-taking strategies
- Accessibility tools and technology
- Asking questions and self-advocacy
- Social support: interactions with peers and professors
- Focusing in class
- Balancing support: How much is too much?
- Academic peer support collaboration with professors
- ...and any other aspect of classes and campus life!



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# Conclusion

“I think the most helpful information from Megan’s videos was enforcing task analysis through measures to help hold our peers accountable. I hope to continue to use Google Calendar and to start setting alarms for and with my peers based off of their schedules.”

“The most valuable information I got from the video about modifying supports was that it’s very helpful to create multiple plans of action for students to complete work and manage time, because they might get distracted (or other things of the like) and abandon the task(s). I will apply this to my work with [peer name] by creating multiple plans for him to manage time and complete work, to further ensure that it gets completed on time, and to solidify the learning that happens during the completion of the homework.”



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