



# PIE Newsletter

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the Program for Instructional Excellence  
at Florida State University

## LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

The final weeks of the fall semester are upon us and it is now full steam ahead to the very end. We at PIE hope that with some freshly recharged batteries following the Thanksgiving break, you are feeling ready to tackle final projects, exams, and all that jazz in your teaching as well as your own courses before heading into a very well-deserved winter break. The end of the fall semester presents us with an opportunity to look back on what we have accomplished and also think about what lies ahead. As our newsletter this month highlights, PIE continues to offer opportunities to think about your TA future while benefiting from sharing in the perspectives of other TAs past and present. Please reach out to us [PIE-info@fsu.edu](mailto:PIE-info@fsu.edu) if you would like to continue the conversation about any of the contents of this issue or PIE more generally.

## TA SPOTLIGHT



Morgan Hamilton is a 3rd year PhD student in the Museum Education and Visitor-Centered Curation program in the department of Art Education. His research follows the trend of virtual and augmented reality as a teaching-tool, as well as a means of reaching broader audiences. Morgan believes teaching is best done when it is collaborative, interactive, and relevant to their lives.

**Nomination:** "Morgan is an amazing instructor. He was involved in creating the course he is currently teaching about edu-curation in museums."

# Coping With Covid



## Fun Fact:

Snow appears white because it is a bunch of individual ice crystals arranged together. When light hits snow, it bounces all around the ice crystals and the “color” of all the frequencies in the visible spectrum combined in equal measure is white. While white is the color we see in snow, individual ice crystals are actually translucent.



This semester of navigating COVID in our classrooms has seen us adapt and settle into new routines. We can and should congratulate ourselves for our successes. At the same time, spring semester may well see more colds, flu, and other potential classroom disruptors enter into the equation. We offer this series of questions to guide your planning:

1. How have I handled catching up students who have missed class meetings? What technologies or other tools might I use to streamline this process?
2. How have syllabi from August fared this fall semester? What changes might be considered to build in more flexibility for spring?
3. How has my classroom community been? What might I do to strengthen the connection within our community of learners?



## Slice of Advice

**Q:** How do I stop comparing my academic performance to my peers and remain positive when it seems like my academic success is less than?

**A:** You made it this far for a reason. You are 100% capable of success, but it's always good to remember, you are your own person. Everyone navigates life in a different way. For this reason, there are different disciplines in academics. Everyone has a talent or a topic of interest that comes more easily to them, and that can be frustrating if it's something you really love, but you have to try twice as hard to accomplish it. Showing your motivation and desire to learn more in your field shows those around you that you are willing to put in the work to achieve success. Remember, you are capable, you are intelligent, and you can do anything you put your mind to. I personally struggle with comparing myself to my peers, and I always remind myself that it doesn't make me inferior. If anything, it makes me stronger. If everything happened the way we expect it to or if everything was easy, then life would be boring. Use this as your motivation to push yourself further in your career, and instead of comparing yourself to your peers, ask for their guidance. There is no shame in asking for help. We don't have to go through our academic careers alone.

Submit your questions here!



# Try a Taste of PIE:



## PEER TEACHING OBSERVATIONS

If you would like to get your teaching next semester off to a strong start, you are encouraged to request a free, no-stakes peer observation by one of our fabulous PIE associates. Whether you are new to teaching, assigned to a class you have not taught before, or simply looking for new perspectives on what you're doing in the classroom, having pre- and post-observation conversations with a peer observer early in the spring semester can help you take stock of strengths and areas for improvement, with enough time left to continue growing and trying new things. Check out this brief video for some highlights: <https://youtu.be/UBh7rZzokno>

To request an observation, please complete this Qualtrics form: [https://fsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_ahINuKgxV1pwTVr](https://fsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ahINuKgxV1pwTVr)

We look forward to serving (and observing) you!

## TEACHING AS A NON-INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD: YOUR IMPACT ON THE CLASSROOM

Date & Time: Thursday, 12/02 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM (will be held virtually via Zoom)

Presenters: 2021-2022 PIE Associates

Description: If you are serving as a TA who is not the instructor of record, you may feel that your position is "less important" compared to an instructor of record. This is simply untrue! Join us as our PIE Associate share tips and techniques for non-instructor of record TA tasks and discuss the crucial need you fulfill in the classroom.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



**Do you know a fantastic graduate student teaching assistant who has gone above and beyond in the classroom? Nominate them for the 2021-2022 Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award (OTAA)! Nominations are due 1/19/22 and can be submitted via this survey: <https://bit.ly/OTAA-NOMINATION-21-22>**

**Please note, you must be either a faculty member, an undergraduate student, or a non-graduate student staff member to nominate a TA. Graduate students are not permitted to nominate TAs.**