

UTA Reflection
Spring 2020
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This semester, I was an undergraduate teaching assistant for introductory linear algebra, with Dr. Jones as my mentor. It was a really great and amazing experience. I learned so much from the students and from Dr. Jones, and I'm so grateful for the opportunity! One of the reasons that I wanted to UTA for linear algebra in particular is that it's my favorite math class so far. I took it last semester, and despite my extreme challenges in calculus 2 the previous year, I ended up loving it so much that linear algebra was the class that made me change my major to math. Before then, I was an elementary education major with a math minor, now I'm a math major with an elementary education minor. I wanted other people to be as excited as I am about linear algebra, and it was also personally helpful for me in that it helped me to cement my understanding of topics from linear algebra. In particular, creating my own practice problems for the exams and working through them with the students really helped me to make sure I fully understand everything in the class, since I don't just have one teacher grading my work, but a whole class of students questioning me on why I'm right! This is especially important considering that I'm taking 413 over the summer, so I need a solid understanding of the 313 concepts.

Before I started the UTA program, I was extremely socially anxious and not very good at interacting with other people. I still kind of am, but being a UTA for a collaborative learning class has helped me a lot. Before, I would be terrified of approaching a table of students and asking them if they have any questions, whereas now, it's still a little bit scary because of my anxiety, but I can do it! This has helped me in more than just being a UTA, as improved social skills have motivated me to study more with my other classmates and get help from tutors when I need it. The UTA program has also definitely increased my confidence in myself and my abilities, since when I have to present my knowledge in front of students, that definitely verifies that I know what I'm doing! I would definitely recommend the program to other undergraduate students, as it's helped me so much in so many ways, such as getting over my social anxiety, making sure I fully understand the concepts of the class, increasing my skill at presentations, boosting my confidence, and more. I'm taking Math 413 next summer, and with any luck, I'll be UTA-ing for it next fall!