

Creating, Using, and Assessing Student Teams for Biology Labs

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Although many biology labs make use of student teams, many lab instructors struggle with how to best form these teams, how to help student teams be effective, and how to assess student teamwork. Further, many students resist working in teams and report learning less when in a team than when working individually. For my Intro Organismal Biology course, I have designed and implemented a series of lab exercises that teach students why they should work in a student team and how to be part of an effective team. I have also made use of online software that helps instructors to use self-chosen criteria to build student teams and then formally assess those teams throughout the semester (Team-maker/CATME; www.catme.org). As a result of these interventions, I have experienced improved student satisfaction and success in my labs, as well reduced instructor guesswork and stress regarding student teams.

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Citing This Article

Cheruvellil, K. 2013. Creating, Using, and Assessing Student Teams for Biology Labs. Page 435 in *Tested Studies for Laboratory Teaching*, Volume 34 (K. McMahon, Editor). Proceedings of the 34th Conference of the Association for Biology Laboratory Education (ABLE), 499 pages. <http://www.ableweb.org/volumes/vol-34/?art=49>

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