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A Virtual Tool for Introducing Students to the Compound Microscope

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Abstract

Students who succeed in finding a specimen the first time they use a compound microscope usually become engrossed in observing detail never before available to them. Students who do not find a specimen during their first attempts often become frustrated and give up after a short while, and may never again make a serious attempt to use a microscope. Even though lab manuals for Introductory Biology provide clear stepwise directions for setting up the specimen and the microscope so that success is certain, the initial use of the compound microscope continues to be a problem for instructors who teach at this level. We thought that digital technology could effectively supplement oral and written directions, so we developed a virtual microscope as a teaching tool. It is currently available at www.udel/scope. Using it requires no fees or registration. Our interest now is in letting teachers know that the virtual microscope is available.