

Floral Attraction: A Model for Combining Teaching and Research

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This workshop discusses a novel way of combining undergraduate teaching and ongoing field research. Especially at small colleges, the demands of teaching can be overwhelming and make it very difficult to maintain a quality research program in one's field. I developed a research-based course as part of an NSF ecology grant proposal, as a way to include outreach in the proposal but also as a way to continue with my teaching while participating in a major research project in my field. The course allowed a small group of students to participate in many aspects of the research, including literature review, methods development, fieldwork and lab work, data analysis, and presentation of results. Student evaluations suggest that what they learned and gained in the course was invaluable, and they strongly encouraged the development of similar courses. Teaching the course gave me the time and flexibility I needed to be able to do my research while providing students with a valuable experience in doing the science of ecology. In the workshop, I will present the design and outcomes of the course, and then we will discuss as a group how similar courses might be developed.

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