

## Using Displays to Augment Biology Laboratories

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Displays are a part of many biology departments and can provide much useful information if not some color to a room or hallway. Not only are they important in providing learning material outside the classroom, but they can be interesting and amusing. Displays can elaborate on topics discussed in lectures and labs. In our department we have glass tables located in the hallway where displays are available for viewing. Every semester a teaching assistant is assigned to be the curator of exhibits in order to fulfill a semester job. Each week the display is changed and corresponds to the laboratory exercise of that week. We have found that these displays are useful to students studying for tests, and faculty and the public find them interesting and amusing.

The discussion in the ABLE mini workshop included how to create eye-catching and artistic displays and consisted of some pointers and helpful hints that may turn a display case into an interesting exhibit. These suggestions included the headline or main image; amount of information in the display; setting up the display to guide a viewer through it; emphasizing the most important points with images, color, different typefaces; having someone else look at the display and critique it; and bringing the display all together. This last point is important since the display is a designed work, not just a collection of information. The creative displays and their relevance to laboratory exercises in our department have been successful in gaining much attention and are worth having in any biology department.