

A Module-based Approach to Teaching Animal Behavior

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Animal Behavior is a highly integrative discipline that invites collaboration from scholars in diverse fields within the biological and social sciences. Because the study of Animal Behavior offers truly intriguing glimpses into the natural world and excellent opportunities for investigative open-ended learning, it is also extraordinarily effective at engaging students in the scientific process. Four scientists from 3 GLCA colleges (Hope College, Allegheny College, and College of Wooster) are collaborating to develop integrative teaching modules in Animal Behavior that address fundamental conceptual issues and actively engage students in the process of science. We use an explicit case-study approach that focuses on primary research literature and includes opportunities for independent laboratory research. Mini workshop participants were introduced to 2 of the modules currently under development: "Learning" and "Sexual Selection", and discussed trial phase results as indicated by student outcomes and products resulting from the first year of curriculum development. Participants also provided suggestions for additional modules, including "Foraging Behavior", "Cost-Benefit Analysis", "Measurement of Behavior", and "Parental Behavior".

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