

# Engaging Students in Thoughtful Lab Report Writing: Lessons from 49 Do-Overs

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An ongoing challenge for laboratory instructors is how to best deal with lab reports, especially in an introductory biology course. Many students enter college with little or no experience in this area and are overwhelmed by the number of details to which they should pay attention. The instructor must consider how many lab reports the student should write over a semester, how detailed the reports should be, and how to incorporate the opportunity for students to edit their work. This mini workshop will present ideas developed from 49 attempts to teach an introductory biology course—25 years of trying with one semester off for sabbatical. It will suggest ways to present lab reports to students, to develop rubrics that encourage thoughtful engagement by students in lab report writing and editing, and to simplify the grading process for the instructor. Contributions to the discussion from participants will be encouraged.

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