

Life Without Graduate Students: Utilizing the Talents of Upper Division Students. (A01-gale102435-Poster)

Authors:

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Abstract:

Four year institutions that do not offer graduate programs lack the traditional graduate teaching assistant positions. Instructors at these institutions often find that the teaching demands of their positions require introductory soil science laboratory classes either be large or self-guided in presentation. In order to reduce the class size of the laboratory, the University of Tennessee at Martin began employing Junior and Senior level students as instructors for the Introductory Soil Science laboratories. This program has been in operation for eight years and detailed student evaluations have been conducted during this time. Ninety eight percent of the more than 1500 students participating in the peer instructed laboratories thought it was a good learning experience. They stated that the student instructors communicated on their level and understood their needs. The student instructors gained confidence in their knowledge of the material and their ability to lead a group. Weekly meetings prior to a given exercise provide an opportunity to review the material and concepts to be covered. Given the available resources, this method of instruction has been shown to be successful and with adequate preparation and screening results in few problems in its application.

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