



# Practical Work in School Science: Which Way Now?

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Practical work has been part of science education for just over 100 years and is accepted as an essential and exciting part of understanding this discipline. Although it can be costly and sometimes messy, it simply has to be done if students and teachers are to progress in their understanding. Schools and universities invest millions of pounds in it and the National Curriculum reveres it - but what exactly is going on in classrooms around the country and how are the leading practitioners moving with the times? This book attempts to reflect on the value and purpose of practical work as part of the scientific curriculum. Why are practical exercises so necessary and what do they contribute to the learning process? The chapters examine many issues such as:

- \* how practical work is perceived by students and teachers
- \* whether we will move on to the 'virtual lab'
- \* the limitations of current 'hands-on' work and valuable alternatives to it
- \* the connections between practical work in science education and 'authentic' science
- \* what role experimentation plays in current educational practice. Jerry Wellington is Reader in Education at Sheffield University, and has taught science at all academic levels.



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