

Chemistry Teachers' Role in Changing Practical Work from “Hands On” Activities to “Minds On” Activities

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Abstract

Practical work is important in the effective learning of Chemistry. In most Kenyan secondary schools practical work mainly involves ‘hands on’ activities where learners follow laid down procedures to arrive at a predetermined outcome. This may lead to working without much thought of the actions and thus low conceptualization resulting in poor performance in chemistry at the end of the course. This study aims at providing alternative approach on how to engage the learners’ mind more in practical activities. Data was collected through observations of practical lessons, followed by analysis of instructional materials used by chemistry teachers and questionnaires for the chemistry teachers. The findings showed that the strategies used to teach practical work did not adequately focus on the learners’ ‘minds on’ the activity. The teachers, therefore, require design and resource support for the implementation of learner-centred investigative practical work in secondary school chemistry.

Keywords: Instructional Materials, “Minds On” Practical Activities, Practical Investigations

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