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Undergraduate Physics Labs: Who needs them?

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Instructional labs are a major part of the undergraduate physics curriculum. Typically, they involve substantial financial, instructional and infrastructural resources. Do conventional labs contribute significantly to curriculum learning goals, and are they the most effective use of limited departmental resources?

In this presentation, I will review the changing role of the undergraduate physics lab as a major teaching instrument in the undergraduate curriculum with emphasis on introductory physics labs. Current trends will be examined and various initiatives that have been undertaken at local and national levels will be discussed.

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