Teaching in Laboratory Classes

Teaching in the lab involves everything already discussed but requires additional input from staff.

What’s different about lab teaching?

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How to work with the tricky situations?

A student comes up to you and asks, “Is this right?” What do you do next?

A group of students asks you for help with using a piece of equipment. It’s clear that they haven’t done the preparation exercises designed to explain how it works, and you realise you’re not too sure about demonstrating it to them either. What do you do?

A group of students habitually divides up the work for any lab activity and pools results at the end of the experiment. Does this worry you, and if so, what do you do about it?

The class carries out an experiment and shares results at the end of the lab. Your student groups seem to have results very different to the rest of the class. How do you discuss these with the group, and what will you recommend they discuss in their lab report?
What do students want from their lab demonstrator?

**Someone who:**

- is infinitely patient and will explain when necessary
- speaks clearly and loudly – labs are very noisy, busy places
- can integrate the theory and practical aspects of the lab experiment or activity
- can relate the lab work to situations outside in the ‘real world’
- is organized and has time for discussion at the end of the lab
- can help when necessary, but also stand back when things are going fine
- provides a good role model as a lab scientist with regard to safety and experimental techniques
- treats the lab exercises, no matter how simple, as real investigations in science
- is excited by the science and shows a sense of discovery