



Criminalistics Section – 2009

A183 Virtual Forensic Laboratories: A New Instructional Tool

Richard Saferstein, PhD, Forensic Science Consultant, 20 Forrest Court, Mount Laurel, NJ 08054*

After attending this presentation, attendees will be familiar with recently developed virtual laboratories designed to be used in a 2 or 4- year college offering an introductory criminalistics or forensic science course.

This presentation will impact the forensic community by its design to improve the teaching of introductory criminalistics by familiarizing the student with state-of-the art laboratory protocols.

Thirteen virtual forensic laboratories have been created to capture the real-life experience of working in a forensic lab. The targeted audience is students enrolled in undergraduate forensic courses and programs. The labs were developed with Flash 8 and use 2-dimensional art to simulate the lab setup. Each lab starts with a crime scene scenario. Typically, a lab will have different sub-sections designed to take the user through a logical flow of the different components of the experiment. The user will be allowed to interact with equipment simulations while performing all the steps in an experiment. The user will also be allowed to fill datasheets while performing the experiment.

Two of the virtual experiments, a forensic hair comparison and a drug analysis utilizing gas chromatography-mass spectrometry, will be used to illustrate the utility of virtual laboratories as an instructional tool in the classroom.

Virtual Laboratory, Virtual Hair Comparison, Virtual Drug Analysis Drug