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A Rolling Laboratory Platform for the Mobility Handicapped

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With the advent of mainstreaming handicapped students into primary and secondary schools and the increased enrollment of handicapped students in institutions of higher education, many schools are faced with the problem of adapting their chemistry laboratories for use by the mobility handicapped. Although portable laboratory stations designed for use by the mobility handicapped are available,[1] both the expense of these units [about $3,000 each] and their size precludes their use by many institutions.

Investigations by the authors, one of whom is a senior university student and is a paraplegic, have demonstrated that these problems can be overcome through the use of a rolling laboratory platform onto which the student's wheelchair is fastened. This is an extension of the concept used by Dr. Robert Larsen of the Argonne Laboratory in his rolling platform chair,[2] but it is more widely adaptable for the wide range of mobility handicaps commonly found in an academic laboratory.

The rolling laboratory platform allows for easy lateral mobility in the laboratory [which a wheelchair lacks], and the added height allows the handicapped individual to utilize the standard work benches and utility outlets. Such a system provides the student with the maximum amount of self-sufficiency and self-reliance without subjecting the institution to time-consuming and expensive laboratory modifications.

The authors feel that the use of such a rolling laboratory platform should present no increased safety hazard for the handicapped student. With the increased lateral mobility and height, rapid transit and use of such safety devices such as safety showers and emergency exits should actually be increased.

Full details concerning the construction of a rolling laboratory platform may be obtained from the authors.

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[1] Conco Industries, 30 Water St., West Haven, CT 06516

[2] Redden, M. R., *et al.*, "Science for the Handicapped Students in Higher Education," American Association for the Advancement of Science, Washington, D. C., p. 27

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