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Book Review

HERBERT WALDMAN and
PETRA JANNING

Chemical biology, a practical course

Wiley-VCH, 2004,
207 pp; price £24.95
ISBN 3-527-30778-8 (paperback)

This book describes a series of what are described as '12 inspiring experiments written by a variety of authors that constitute a practical course of an academic programme in the new discipline chemical biology'. The authors explain that this particular series of experiments has been performed by chemistry and biology students at both the University of Dortmund and the University of Borchum, together with the Max-Planck-Institute of Molecular Physiology, Dortmund. While the experiments are well described, with a reasonably comprehensive introduction and stated learning outcomes, they do represent a wide and varied range of topics and without any understanding of their integration into the academic programme it is difficult not to consider this book as just a departmental practical work guide. However, many of the experiments contained within the book do represent a comprehensive and logical guide to a variety of current methodologies that could be considered useful in a variety of experimental and research strategies or as individual practical exercises to be included in other academic programmes in either chemistry or biology. In particular, those chapters dealing with the areas of DNA and DNA hybridization, enzyme purification, proteomics and combinatorial synthesis and genetic algorithm contain both useful practical and background information of use to both graduate and postgraduate students alike.

In conclusion, this is a well-written book containing relevant experimental detail and background information, comprehensive in many respects, which, although in its entirety is unlikely to find a wide application throughout the academic community, covers a range of subject areas that would be a useful addition to many libraries.

P. H. Whiting
School of Allied Health Sciences, De Montfort University, Leicester, UK

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