

## **Student Views of a Life Sciences Methodology Module Offered at a Distance Institution**

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**ABSTRACT** The question whether it is possible to train teachers at a distance, is not new and its efficacy has been questioned on numerous occasions. As education at a distance is often viewed as education in isolation, this pedagogy is questioned, particularly where the mastery of particular skills and competences are concerned. The crux of the issue is based on the very nature of teaching and in particular of Life Sciences, which encompasses practical skills and competencies that can usually only be acquired through onsite interactive communication. The lack of physical contact between lecturers and students, and limited opportunities to develop process skills all contribute to challenges for this pedagogy. In an attempt to determine to what extent a particular module offered at a distance, does prepare prospective Life Sciences teachers for their task, a survey was undertaken on a cohort of students who had successfully completed the module. This paper reports on this study and identifies possible limitations to the efficacy of teacher training. Suggestions are made about how these can be addressed in the module to improve Life Sciences teacher training with the focus on open and distance electronic learning.