

FROM THE LAB BENCH TO THE KITCHEN BENCH: SUPPORTING SCIENCE SKILLS TRAINING AT HOME

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Lab based learning experiences provide rich opportunities for our students to practise science in an authentic context and help to equip them with the necessary technical skills for their future employment. The recent disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the necessity of the science sector to respond to both the immediate and future challenges associated with the virus. Yet at the same time, opportunities to develop the necessary skill sets were absent; many academics forced to either remove the practical element from courses or supplement with videos and data sets for analysis.

We developed the Kitchen Lab program to provide a safe-to-fail, learner-centred environment for students to further develop technical skills and confidence that will support their success. Workshops are curriculum aligned, inquiry-based, and free from assessment. In the current environment, Kitchen Lab could serve as a model to support others in maintaining authentic and physical laboratory learning opportunities for their students.

This presentation will discuss the development and implementation of a blended delivery of science skills training in the co-curricular space in response to the enforced shutdown of face-to-face learning on campus. Challenges and opportunities to supporting hands-on skills in this space will be considered.

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