kUP interview for first year module

1

No, just a lack of any sense of the importance of conservation

2

No, there are ten times more students than what we can handle. However, very few of them really want to be in the Botany programme. Our dual major system forces them to often take a field of study that they are not interested in (Biochemistry / Microbiology / Zoology / Hydrology / Geography / Botany). These inflated numbers are driven by university economics and funding from government.

3

**Broad approach!** Include the classical components of Botany: morphology, anatomy, ecology, taxonomy, physiology, plant diversity (global and of SA). Cell biology and genetics should be added if these fields are not covered by a general biology module.

4

Your categories are very vague. Why not stick to the classical / traditional botanical subsections?

Cell biology, genetics, morphology, anatomy, ecology, taxonomy, physiology, plant diversity. A person should learn the alphabet before they can learn how to read and write.

5

a. Process of science: In this age of social media it is important for a student to understand the difference between data derived findings and agenda driven opinion

b. Interdisciplinary nature of science: Too many young students decide what they want to specialise in for the rest of their careers before they have a well-rounded understanding of the number of scientific fields that have profound impacts on their pet-interest.

f. Understand and interpret data: Although the level of data handling and interpretation at first year level does not have to be very advanced, it is very important to start and develop this critical skill as early as possible.

g. Quantitative competency (Statistics for the life sciences): Students need to be made aware of the value of good data analysis and dangers of poor data handling as early within their studies as possible.

The other categories on your list are complex and can wait for later levels of education.

6

4a. Evolution: Students should first learn what we have now, then later learn how current patterns and processes came about. Without the bigger picture of what we have now, the complex picture of evolutionary patterns and processes make very little sense. At a later level of education, these evolutionary patterns and processes become critically important.

5c. Integration of science with society: Too complex. A student should first learn how to form scientifically derived conclusions before they should be confused with social / agenda driven / political debate on the social digestibility / tolerance for specific scientific fields.

5d. Communication: First arm the student with information, then teach him to convey it to an audience. The current trends driven by social media encourages people to drive their agendas with unsubstantiated opinion instead of empirical data.

5e. Collaboration: A student should first learn to work independently and take responsibility for their part / contribution, before they are encouraged to work collaborative on projects.

7. Yes, it is driven down the throats of all academics all the time.

8. I think that the drive to change the classical scientific programmes are absolutely unnecessary. At higher levels it is appropriate to be more aware of current trends, but not at first year level. The basic forms and functions within the plant kingdom have not changed dramatically within the last 1000 years. First teach the alphabet before you try to explain the finer nuances of Shakespeare’s sonnets.

9. Go back to the basics

10. See point 8.

11. Don’t. Go back to the basics

12. I think it is very important. However, the very large numbers of students within the first year botany class makes it currently impractical to provide sensible practicals.