MYSCOPE CONFOCAL MICROSCOPY: 
AN ON-LINE TRAINING TOOL FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH

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“MyScope” is a project generating a set of on-line modules to be used in providing a blended learning environment for students undertaking research. It is housed on the Australian Microscopy and Microanalysis Research Facility (AMMRF) web site, which is an open access site (http://www.ammrf.org.au/myscope/).

The authors have generated a virtual confocal module with the aim giving researchers an understanding all the common controls and functions on a confocal microscope before they touch the machine (Fig. 1). This online training module starts from basic transmitted light and progresses to widefield fluorescent and then confocal microscopy.

The modules in MyScope include, a mixture of text (including glossary), interactive materials, images, videos, virtual instruments and self-tests. Students are able to interact with the information in ways that suit them, including tailoring the site to their needs. Learning has the capability of being self-directed, however microscope facilities can use these modules to provide ‘pre-training’, to reduce the number of training periods needed on heavily booked instruments, or as an addition to formal or informal courses. Users can self-test their understanding through multiple choice questions and the responses are auto-marked with feedback at the end of the test.

In this contribution, we will present the latest version of the online confocal microscope module along with data of surveys from users and students. We will also illustrate the strengths of this training environment in the use for undergraduate teaching, including the benefits of integrating this tool for training users in microscope core facilities. Acknowledgements: This project has been funded by the Office for Learning and Teaching, Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education and supported by the Australian Microscopy and Microanalysis Research Facility.