

**Title:**                   **Engaging Senior Managers as Project Sponsors for Educational Development Projects**

**Presenters:**       **Pat Atkins, Carole Baume and Penny Bennett**  
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### **Abstract:**

#### **Session Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this workshop, participants will have:

- Explored a possible approach to senior management training for project sponsorship
- Made outline plans for the training of senior managers as project sponsors or business leaders

#### **Session Outline**

In the student support area of The Open University we are facing the need to radically change our business processes, the better to accommodate the use of new learning technologies and a student cohort which is at the same time continuing to be more diverse, more demanding of personalised services, more expecting of e-business solutions and less confident in their ability to learn independently. We have taken the step of establishing a change team (Business Improvement Team) to work with teams of learning supporters and student administrators to tackle the changes we need to make in our business. This has involved the formalisation of change projects which are 'owned' and run mostly by staff with little or no educational development experience. Most projects have as project sponsor a senior manager who does not have a background in project management. In Spring 2009 all senior managers who are likely to be asked to be project sponsors participated in a training programme. By the time of the Conference they will have acted in this role in at least one project. Will our training programme have worked?

This workshop will build on the experience of developing educational development project managers led by Carole Baume when she was Director of the National Co-ordination Team for the HEfCE's Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund; Pat Atkins' experience as Director of the Personalised Integrated Learning Support Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning; and Penny Bennett's current management of the Business Improvement Team.

#### **Session Activities and Approximate Timings**

In the workshop we shall share and discuss the approaches to training for senior managers which we have used and the evaluation and extension of this training. (20 minutes)

We shall then encourage participants to plan how they might further develop for their own settings some of the approaches they have heard about in the workshop. If there is sufficient interest amongst participants we shall offer to facilitate the continued sharing of practice in this area.

#### **References**

C. Baume with Martin P. and Yorke M., 'Managing Education Development Projects', London, Kogan Page, 2002

Information about the Personalised Integrated Learner Support Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is available at <http://www.open.ac.uk/pils/>