

**Title:** **Cultivating the Seeds of Innovation. How best to engage and support staff in innovating in a scholarly, sustainable, and transferable way**

**Presenters:** **Patricia Fell, Rachel Moule, Stuart Brand and Marilyn Hammick**  
Birmingham City University

### **Abstract:**

#### **Session Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

1. Analyse ways of supporting educational innovation through macro, meso and micro perspectives.
2. Explore how lessons learnt from a Supporting Innovative Project Scheme (SIPS) may be transferred to a range of other similar academic development initiatives.

#### **Session Outline**

Our work in this area is based on three premises. Contemporary universities need to harness and support grass-roots innovation and development in learning and teaching to attract twenty-first century students and staff (Carter and Halsall, 2000). Equally important is the need to ensure that learning is linked in a meaningful way to the students' future role in the workplace; thus employer engagement and partnership become key elements in an evolving curriculum (CBI 2008, Leitch 2006). Finally, we believe that robust processes for evaluating the impact of curriculum change are essential, not only to provide evidence of effectiveness but also because this creates capacity and the culture necessary for future pedagogic development (Dobbins, 2008).

In this workshop we will share macro, meso and micro perspectives on a university wide Supporting Innovative Project Scheme (SIPS). SIPS provided resources and opportunities for staff to develop and trial their own ideas for enhancing student learning. From external consultancy, managerial, academic and operational viewpoints we share our reflections on the successes and the challenges that we faced. As the scheme progressed we began to understand the key characteristics of and differences between what is essential and what is desirable for small project groups to work successfully in this way. A dedicated support network assisted in removing the many barriers that can hinder innovative staff. Interestingly, whilst evaluative data to date suggested that this 'one stop support service' was highly valued by project leads as an enabler of innovation; finance was found to play a minor role (Moule and Fell, 2008).

Continuous evaluation of the scheme and of individual projects has enabled us to develop an emerging model that promotes pedagogic innovation and research. In this session, we intend to generate discussion regarding the potential transferability of this model to other similar academic development projects and initiatives as well as promoting links with like minded areas.

## Session Activities and Approximate Timings

Please provide an indication of how the session will be structured and how activities and discussion will be facilitated. For discussion papers please include a few indicative questions which will focus the discussion element.

1. Introduction to the workshop and each other - 5 mins
2. Outline of the supporting innovative projects scheme - plenary, 10 mins
3. Mapping SIPS model to participants' context - small group work, 20 mins
4. Plenary feedback and key take home messages -10 mins

The feedback gathered from this workshop will be used as part of the project team's ongoing evaluation of SIPS. The session will be evaluated with delegates, against the stated learning outcomes. At the end of the workshop delegates will have opportunity to note some key learning points to take back to base for transfer into action.

## References

Carter, K and Halsall, R (2000): Development projects as a vehicle for managing change in higher education: learning from the journey. Research in Post – Compulsory Education. Vol 5, No3, p317-348.

CBI Higher Education Taskforce (2008): Stepping Higher: Workforce development through employer-higher education partnership. Report sponsored by Universities UK and HEFCE. Copyright CBI 2008.

<http://www.cbi.org.uk/highereducation>

Dobbins K (2008): Enhancing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: A Study of the Factors Identified as Promoting and Hindering the Scholarly Activities of Academics in One Faculty International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Vol. 2, No. 2 ISSN 1931-4744 @ Georgia Southern University

<http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/ijsot/>

Leitch S (2006): Prosperity for All in the Global Market- World Class Skills. Final Report, December 2006. HMSO, London.

[http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/leitch\\_finalreport051206.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/leitch_finalreport051206.pdf)

Moule and Fell (2008): How best to engage and support teaching staff in innovating in a scholarly, sustainable and transferable way? Lessons learnt from recent initiatives in Faculty of Health. Poster presented at the HEA Festival of Learning: Enhancing Learning in Health Sciences and Practice, 11-13 March 2008, University of Cumbria, Carlisle.

<http://www.health.heacademy.ac.uk/scevents/fo/fo2008/fo2008posters/posterpages2008/index.html>