

**Title:**                   **Facilitating Skills for Successful Undergraduate Learning: engaging students and staff in the process**

**Presenter:**       **Scott Buckler**  
University of Worcester

## **Abstract:**

### **Session Learning Outcomes**

- Analyse the issues and possible solutions in facilitating the development of effective learning skills within their courses;
- Examine the issues and tensions in raising the profile of skills for effective learning with students and staff;
- Consider other delegates' practical suggestions for utilisation within their own institution.

### **Session Outline**

This session provides an overview of recent Education-based research into the development of learning skills while discussing broader lessons applicable across other undergraduate disciplines.

Developing effective skills for learning would appear to be a crucial element for any higher education course as it cannot be assumed that undergraduate students are autonomous with their learning (Weidel, 1996; Gettinger and Seibert, 2002). Several government-funded research projects have investigated the necessary skills to equip learners through exploring the training and development of Key Skills (DfEE, 2000; Drew, Shaw & Mowthorpe, 2000; Gillespie & Wilmot, 2004), however few have focussed on actual pedagogy of such skills (Open University, 2002; Fretts, 2003).

Within higher education, facilitating the higher-order skills of meta-learning (Biggs, 1985) and intentional learning (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1993; Dunlap, 1997) appears problematic (Open University, 2002). In particular, recent research findings indicate that students and tutors do not rate the development of these skills as a high priority, (Buckler, Bigger & Townsend, 2006; MacKay, 2005). Consequently this session will:

- Outline research conducted within Education through a comparative study of three institutions, a case study on implementing a managed learning environment and through the author's trial and improvement;
- Identify the needs and nature of the changing undergraduate population;
- Identify the issues and tensions of raising the profile of skills for learning with university staff and tutors;
- Discuss how such skills should be facilitated and the advantages/limitations of proposed models.

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

- Introduction and overview of previous research (10 mins)
- Outline of the two discussion tasks (5 mins)
- Discussion groupings (20 mins)

- Group 1 – Identification of issues and resolutions in raising the profile and ownership of skills for effective study with students;
- Group 2 – Identification of issues and resolutions in raising the profile and ownership of skills for effective study with tutors;
- Group 3 – How skills can be facilitated? –Advantages and limitations of a single module, whether skills are embedded throughout a course... or both?
- Feedback and plenary (10 mins)

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