

**Title:** **Instructional Skills Workshops: what are they and how do we know they work?.**

**Presenter:** **Celia Popovic and John Paul Foxe**  
York University, Ryerson University

### **Session Learning Outcomes**

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

Describe the ISW format  
Locate the literature currently available on ISW efficacy

### **Session Outline**

The Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) is a structured peer led 3-day event which focusses on the skills and behaviours of effective instruction and has been shown to bring about transformative change (Dawson et al, 2014). It is not about course design or curriculum, rather it is about improving instructors' teaching skills. The ISW is extremely popular in Canada where it originated and a few other countries, with over 100 universities and colleges running the scheme. However, it is not widely known about in Europe in general or the UK in particular. In this session we aim to share the approach with the SEDA community and show how it works in practice.

Given the popularity of the ISW there has been a surprisingly small amount of research about it, but evaluations of the ISW both immediately on completion and some time later consistently show that instructors move from an instructor led to a student led approach, that they incorporate more active learning and fewer passive approaches, and that they are frequently keen to become facilitators of the ISW themselves.

We reflect on the success and popularity of the ISW in this active workshop which mirrors the ISW approach in an experiential delivery enabling participants to both engage with the process and reflect on its potential use in a UK HE setting.

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

The outline of the workshop is as follows;

0 to 5 - Introductions (ISW related ice breaker... and bridge and outcomes)

10 mins - What is the ISW? Brief description and history

25 minute demonstration of the teaching cycle - participants take part in a ten minute teaching and 10 minute feedback cycle to give them the experience of taking part in a mini version. This will conclude with a 5-minute reflection on the process.

5 mins wrap up - where we will summarise the benefits and challenges of implementing ISW across an institution.

## **References**

Dawson, D, P. Borin, K. Meadows, J. Britness, K. Olsen, G. McIntyre (2014) The Impact of Instructional Skills Workshop on Faculty Approaches to Teaching, Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.

Day, R. & the ISW International Advisory Committee. (2004). Instructional Skills Workshop: From grassroots initiative to international perspectives. Paper presented at the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education annual conference, Ottawa, Ontario. Available at: [http://iswnetwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Hand5\\_ICED.pdf](http://iswnetwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Hand5_ICED.pdf) retrieved July 30, 2015

Smith, R.A., Pang, M., & Chuah, K.B. (2001). Building a Teaching Culture: The Instructional Skills Workshop in Hong Kong. Paper presented at The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Conference, Hong Kong. Available at: [http://iswnetwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/062\\_smith.htm](http://iswnetwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/062_smith.htm). Accessed July 30, 2015