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Strategies to Bridge Learning Gaps through Summer Academic Skills Orientation

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ABSTRACT

Students transitioning into university often demonstrate gaps in learning, leading to academic challenges. This session will share the orientation programs of McMaster University's Student Success Centre (SSC) Academic Skills Development programs, which offer learning opportunities to bridge these gaps through peer mentoring and opportunities for collaborations with Faculty and staff across disciplinary contexts. The primary objective of these collaborations and programs is to develop the academic skills necessary to build student resiliency, by increasing effectiveness in notetaking, academic reading, and writing skills in various disciplines and using feedback. These begin with SSC Academic Skills pre-orientation summer programming, in particular during the Academic Skills Orientation, the Summer Writing Program, and the Welcome Week Series. During our conference SoTL Sandbox session, we will discuss the summer academic skills model, its goals, design, learning objectives, administrative logistics, implementation, resources, and related research initiatives. We will continue by sharing the rationale of our academic services which provide long-term sustained support, opportunities to receive and give mentorship, cultivate professional skills; all with a self-directed and collaborative learning progression. Attendees of our conference session will identify skills that are essential to academic success and considered vital to professional development by participating in active facilitated discussions. Presenters will also give attendees "hands on" access to our resources and online exemplars. Attendees will be encouraged and inspired to design and implement the presented academic skills into their undergraduate and graduate courses and see the value of campus partnerships both across faculties and with student support services.