**UNE L&T Symposium 2024 – Presentation Synopsis**

**1. Title of Presentation:**

**From Professional Coaching to Academic Foundations: Rebuilding First-Year EXSC Curriculum Around Core Academic Skills**

**2. Presenter(s) Name(s) and Affiliation(s):**

Dr Dan Ferris BSpSc (Hons) PhD AHPM

**3. Main Takeaways:**

***Takeaway 1:*** Explicitly teaching core academic skills in first-year EXSC units helps bridge the gap between student enthusiasm and academic readiness, improving confidence and performance.

***Takeaway 2:*** Scaffolded, skills-based activities aligned with assessments enhance student retention, engagement, and success without sacrificing the applied nature of the degree.

**4. Application in Educational Contexts:**

***Teaching Methods:***[*Specific ways the presentation's content can be incorporated into teaching practices – provide 2 sentences of 40 words or less – if not applicable indicate with NA*.]

* Embedding weekly micro-skills tasks (e.g., literature analysis, academic writing drills) supports incremental learning and reduces cognitive overload.
* Using structured referencing and research workshops encourages active learning and boosts student confidence in academic processes.

**Assessment:** [*Specific ways the presentation's content can be incorporated into assessment practices – provide 2 sentences of 40 words or less – if not applicable indicate with NA*.]

* Aligning scaffolded skills-based activities with graded assessments ensures academic development is directly relevant and measurable.
* Low-stakes formative assessments allow students to practise academic conventions before being formally assessed, reducing anxiety and improving outcomes.

**Student Engagement:** [*Specific ways the presentation's content can be incorporated into student engagement – provide 2 sentences of 40 words or less – if not applicable indicate with NA*.]

- Interactive and practical tasks (e.g., discussion-based literature reviews, peer referencing checks) promote active engagement and peer learning.

- Students feel more confident and involved when academic skills are demystified through relevant, real-world examples from sport science.

**Curriculum Development:** [Specific ways the presentation's content can be incorporated into Curriculum Development – provide 2 sentences of 40 words or less – if not applicable indicate with NA.]

* First-year EXSC curriculum was redesigned to embed academic literacy explicitly across modules, not just in isolated workshops.
* The integrated approach ensures academic skill development is continuous, contextual, and aligned with both subject content and assessment.

**5. Valuable Sources and References:**

**Source 1:** Ruiz‑Martín et al. Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications (2024) 9:44

https://doi.org/10.1186/s41235‑024‑00567‑5

**6. Weakness and Area for Future Research:**

**Weakness:** This approach was implemented in a single discipline-specific context (EXSC), which may limit generalisability to other health or science courses.

**Future Research:** Further studies should examine the transferability of this embedded academic skills model across disciplines and evaluate long-term academic outcomes beyond first year.