



Essential Components for Issuing ISW Certificates

In the last few years it has become increasingly apparent that the ISW (originally conceived as a face to face model of instructional development) is being adapted into different delivery modalities using a variety of technological tools. When doing so the values and inherent objectives of the ISW Program must continue to be included so that an ISW Certificate can be granted.

What follows is a result of extensive conversations about the essential components of an ISW, regardless of delivery method, and ***as distinguished from other forms of instructional or professional development in teaching.***

Essential components of an ISW - see the ISW Network Description for more information

<https://www.iswnetwork.ca/resources/instructional-skills-workshop-isw-network-description/>

Face-to-face ISWs

- 24 hours long (plus homework)
- Small groups of participants (4-6) per facilitator or pair of facilitators
- Facilitated using a peer-based model of feedback versus an expert model
- Use of an instructional design model (BOPPPS/CARD)
- A focus on guided practice, including:
 - 3 distinct opportunities for participants to teach a lesson to the group
 - 3 distinct opportunities for participants to receive feedback from each member of the group (not the facilitator)
 - 3 forms of feedback for each participant per lesson (written, verbal and video)
- Confidentiality regarding all the group processes
- Group discussions on pedagogical issues
- A focus on active learning and active listening

Note: ISWs are led by facilitators who have completed a **Facilitator Development Workshop (FDW) or the Facilitator Apprenticeship program.**

Virtual ISWs

For the purposes of our distinctions we adopted the term “virtual ISW” to indicate that a typical face-to-face (F2F) ISW is being delivered using virtual tools (most recently to ensure physical distancing due to Covid-19). We see it as essential that a virtual ISW, intended to help people improve their face-to-face or blended teaching, be offered in a combination of synchronous and asynchronous modes but with a greater focus on synchronous learning (e.g., using tools such as Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate, etc.).

For example, some ISW models might host synchronous lessons and/or feedback cycles and have other parts of the program be facilitated asynchronously; other ISW models might choose to post video (F2F) lessons and then host synchronous feedback and/or theme sessions. If you have done your lessons face-to-face in the past, consider having participants teach their lessons synchronously with the other participants as learners (virtually there), using something like Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate, so they are still teaching synchronously as they would in a face-to-face situation.

Online ISWs

Online ISWs have developed over a number of years with varying institutional objectives and content. At this moment in the evolution and expansion of the ISW Network, it is necessary to make the distinction between what we now consider an online ISW versus courses or other forms of professional development in how to teach online.

One of the major objectives of an online ISW would be to assist participants in becoming familiar with delivering instruction online but, unlike other courses about teaching online, it would still include the essential components of an ISW (such as 3 opportunities for each participant to teach a lesson to the other members of the small group, 3 distinct opportunities for participants to receive feedback from each member of the small group, and 3 distinct forms of feedback). As such, an online ISW would still incorporate some synchronous tools to accomplish those ISW outcomes, even if participants do not intend to use synchronous tools in their own online teaching. Other content would most likely be delivered asynchronously within a course management system.

In summary, an ISW of *whatever* type must incorporate the following:

- Three lessons per participant (in small groups of no more than 6 participants to 1 or 2 facilitators)
- The use of the ISW's instructional design models (BOPPPS/CARD)
- Constructive feedback for each lesson from the peer participants (**not** the facilitator) that includes written, verbal and video feedback
- Opportunities for participants to review, reflect on, and discuss their feedback (however presented) with the facilitator and/or the other participants
- At least three theme-based sessions (for ISWs with multiple facilitators each working with 4-6 participants in their small groups, these may be offered as 'large group sessions' if they take place in a large group of all participants)
- For all ISWs, required theme sessions are completed prior to the first lesson/feedback cycle and include: lesson planning, writing learning outcomes/objectives, and giving and receiving constructive feedback. Additional theme sessions typically depend on the interests of the participants or the intended outcomes specific to the ISW modality, such as using online tools or managing classroom discussions
- Opportunities to achieve other essential ISW outcomes related to community building, self-reflection, and the learning that comes with both structured and informal discussions about learning and teaching. In this way, the ISW, regardless of delivery mode, becomes much more than 'practice teaching' or taking a course on instructional design.