Essential Components of an FDW (Facilitator Development Workshop)

Regardless of delivery modality (F2F or virtual*), FDWs prepare participants to facilitate all the essential components of an ISW (See https://www.iswnetwork.ca/essential-components-for-isws/).

Unlike the ISW which is primarily a developmental program in teaching, the FDW is designed for participants to learn and demonstrate a set of ISW facilitation competencies and values for the purposes of offering the ISW. It is skill based and, as such, participants will end the FDW with a set of recommendations from Trainers for further skill acquisition before attempting to facilitate an ISW on their own. New facilitators should co-facilitate ISWs to become confident in utilizing a variety of facilitation techniques and approaches. All ISW Facilitators are encouraged to participate in professional development activities and become familiar with Policies and Practices available through the ISW website and other Network communications.

Both the ISW and FDW programs are experiential in nature and are designed around the principles of collaboration and peer support.

The following details those components which must be included for a workshop to be considered an FDW.

- Is approximately 40 hours long

- Involves four or five educators per group participating as facilitators/instructors/learners

- Is led by one or two FDW Trainers (or FDW Trainer and a Trainer-Trainee) per group

- Involves three, ten-minute lessons per participant as per the ISW model

- Includes three, sixty-minute facilitation and feedback cycles per participant to practice facilitation skills

- Focuses on ISW lesson, feedback and facilitation basics

- Provides three forms of feedback (written, verbal and video) from other participants on facilitation skills

- Provides opportunities for discussion with the Trainers on areas of development

- Provides reflective opportunities for participants to examine their own strengths and challenges as ISW Facilitators, with time to focus on improvements

- Prepares participants to lead ISWs on their own through increased understanding of such concepts as experiential learning, lesson design, group development, active learning, constructive feedback and climate setting.

*Virtual FDWs

For the purposes of our distinctions we adopted the term "virtual FDW" to indicate that a typical face-to-face (F2F) FDW is being delivered using virtual tools (most recently to ensure physical distancing due to Covid-19). We see it as essential that a virtual FDW 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.).

There is, of course, flexibility in the design of the virtual FDW. For example, some FDWs might host synchronous lessons and/or feedback cycles and have other parts of the program be facilitated asynchronously. Consideration should be given to whether FDW participants will be facilitating virtual ISWs or face to face ISWs and they should become familiar with the distinctions and advantages of both modalities.

Apprenticeship Model

When it is difficult to access the FDW, it is possible to learn ISW facilitation skills through the Apprenticeship model. In this context, potential facilitators are mentored by an experienced ISW Facilitator over a number of ISWs (2-3), gradually moving from shadowing the Facilitator to assuming responsibility for co-facilitation. For complete guidelines on the Apprenticeship Model, visit https://www.iswnetwork.ca/apprenticeship-guidelines/. The Apprenticeship model can be implemented for both F2F and virtual ISWs.