

ISW and Technology – Enhanced, Extended, Online

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Summary: *In this paper we explore how ISW principles can be incorporated into technology-mediated environments, and what to consider when delivering ISW online. We offer definitions for terms used in virtual environments so the ISW community can work toward a common understanding. We describe characteristics of three delivery modes: in-person, virtual¹, and blended; and four adaptations: essential ISW, media-enhanced, extended and online. These topics were discussed during the 2014 ISW Institute at Edenvale, Abbotsford, British Columbia:*

- *Making ISW broadly accessible*
- *Extending ISW participatory learning principles into virtual environments*
- *Incorporating virtual delivery strategies into ISW*
- *Supporting ISW Facilitators who are working with technology*

ISW and Technology: Enhanced, Extended, Online

This paper explores a number of questions regarding the current trends in ISW delivery related to online learning, defines the terms used and describes options for ensuring online education is integrated into ISW delivery.

In September 2014, 32 Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) Facilitators gathered in Abbotsford, BC, to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the ISW program. We explored key aspects of the program in three theme sessions:

- Core principles
- International delivery
- ISW facilitation online

A variety of questions quickly came to the forefront:

- How can we make the ISW as accessible as possible?
- How can the educational principles that are central to the ISW be extended to education in an online environment?
- How can we incorporate learning about online delivery strategies into the ISW?
- How can ISW support instructors who are working in the online environment?

During the period of COVID 19, starting in March 2020, all ISW programs have had to find a way to move online, and these questions have become central to that conversion process.

What is an ISW. The ISW is a 24-hour intensive training experience for post-secondary educators. Based on David Kolb's experiential learning model, the ISW combines a learner-centred and laboratory approach (Morrison & Wilbee, 2012) to transform teaching practices through active experimentation and reflective practice (MacPherson, 2011).

¹ Virtual: a computer software representation of a physical environment, such as a recorded presentation, an online classroom or an online discussion forum.

ISW is primarily a face-to-face learning forum, but has always sought to incorporate educational technology in meaningful ways. The first ISWs incorporated video feedback when it took two people to lift a video recorder! The ISW has since been adapted to include delivery using a variety of instructional technologies: videoconferencing, audiovisual media, computers, and synchronous & asynchronous e-learning.

Moving Online. According to ISW Facilitators, some educational institutions are using distributed learning² strategies in their ISW delivery, to increase the accessibility of the ISW program, rather than as a strategic focus on online education. Other institutions have moved to a three day face-to-face ISW model rather than four or five, to increase accessibility and reduce costs. Some Facilitators have expressed concern that the central ISW principle of reflection on practice is compromised with the decrease in time.

In addition to moving courses online, institutions are also encouraging blended course delivery, resulting in an increased need for instructors to have skills in online learning. This includes both the use of technology enhancements and the translation of a learner-centred education model into the online environment. Students arrive at post-secondary institutions with experience in collaborative learning, including the flipped classroom and online learning (Erickson & Neset, 2014). College and university educators are often playing catch-up, being called upon to create active learning environments, not as an innovation, but as a cultural expectation.

Principles. Central to the ISW is a focus on outcomes-based education, shifting the focus of education from the teacher to the learner, and reflecting on professional practice (Kerr, 2014). It follows, then, that additions or changes in delivery to the ISW will be most successful if they continue to include these central ideas. For example, whatever technology is chosen to enhance course delivery, it should be seen as a tool to support the above principles, rather than the technology being the focus of the learning experience. ISW participants will benefit most from learning how to generalize the educational principles they learn in the course to any educational environment, rather than learning about the application in a particular environment or focusing on a particular technology that is current. If ISW participants are given opportunities to try out new teaching methods in face-to-face as well as online environments they are more likely to be able to apply these skills in either environment in the future.

Supporting Facilitators. ISW Facilitators are being called upon to demonstrate best practices in blended and online learning. Online components may be best introduced slowly, added to the ISW program in an institution with the involvement of ISW Facilitators in a piecemeal fashion. In this way, building on previous work as resources allow (Doherty, 2002). However, with COVID-19 restrictions, all institutions have been forced into rapid online development for all programs.

Several ISW Facilitators described the online tools they are using and expressed a willingness to share these with other facilitators and institutions, for example: posting samples of mini-lessons (10 -minute lessons delivered by ISW participants to practice their teaching strategies), theme sessions (learning theory and related topics delivered by ISW Facilitators) and demonstration of online tools. These can

² Distributed Learning: The content, the Instructor/Facilitator and the learners may be in different places at different times. Learning is mediated by some form of instructional technology.

enhance the face-to-face theme sessions and are examples of what could be shared in a more coordinated and accessible way.

Protecting Reflecting. Time for reflection is an important component in the ISW. As one participant in our discussion noted, the ISW is transforming the educational practices of the participants and, ultimately, will affect thousands of learners. A 24-hour workshop isn't a lot of time to attempt this level of change. Time for reflection is an important component of any educational process (Day, 1993), particularly one as dynamic as the ISW. Creating online ISW lessons that encourage reflection and/or require additional discussion in a face-to-face environment is one strategy to increase flexibility in delivery while maintaining this component.

Enhancing the ISW with online components, particularly moving content heavy pieces to an online lesson, either before or during the ISW, has been suggested as a way to make room for the reflection that allows participants to transform their practice as well as increase accessibility. In addition, creating an opportunity for ISW participants to deliver a sample lesson in an online format seems critical to support their educational development and the transferability of their new skills into an online environment. This can be accomplished by offering an advanced lab after the ISW, possibly with an asynchronous lesson that allows participants to deliver an online lesson, followed by a face-to-face session in which participants can discuss their experiences and receive feedback from their peers. Participants can also be provided with a discussion page on a central course site or, and perhaps leading to greater generalizability, participants could be encouraged to use a variety of open source formats to create a lesson for their ISW colleagues to access.

Theme Sessions. ISW theme sessions (sessions focused on a particular aspect of teaching and learning) may be enhanced by discussions about applying the ideas in the session to online environments. For example, a theme session about diverse learning needs could include a discussion about accommodating diverse learning needs in an online environment. A session about delivering effective feedback could include methods for delivering feedback online. This type of integration into the face-to-face sessions in an ISW may improve the ability of participants to generalize their new knowledge into the online and blended environment. Providing Facilitators with resources to lead these discussions would be an important addition to the FDW resource package.

In Closing. The ISW is a transformative experience for many participants, shifting their focus from teaching to the process of learning. Participants need to be given the tools to bring this new philosophy to any educational environment. Whether ISWs are delivered face-to-face, online, or in a blended format, making reflection on online learning an integral component of the ISW is essential to the continued relevance and effectiveness of this dynamic workshop.

Characteristics of Different ISW Modes and Adaptations

The purpose of this table is to distinguish different ways that technology enhances the ISW, so Trainers and Facilitators can discuss and come to agreement on the terminology.

Table 1. Key distinctions of different adaptations of the ISW model for different delivery modes. Green-shaded cells indicate the primary Mode for each Adaptation.

Delivery Mode	Classroom Learning	Distributed Learning	Blended Learning
Adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - live, same location - in-class audiovisual media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - learners, content and instructor can be in different locations, instruction may be live or time-independent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using a mix of classroom and virtual learning activities
Classroom ISW Practice teaching with a <u>focus on classroom learning</u> and student-centred outcomes	Conventional ISW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lessons are delivered face-to-face, using hands-on AV media and props - the focus is on classroom instruction 	(Online for Classroom Instruction) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - simulate the classroom online - theme sessions explore F2F learning strategies 	Blended Learning for F2F Instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in-class simulations - theme sessions explore F2F learning principles
Media Enhanced ISW An ISW that incorporates the use of AV technology to <u>enhance learning</u> : computers, internet, slides, video, audio, Videoconferencing Skills Workshop (VSW), Technology Mediated Teaching (TMT) etc.	ISW with Audiovisual Tech <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lessons focus on use of classroom-based audiovisual media and computers - extend set-up and feedback times, separate feedback for learning from tech debrief 	ISW via Multimedia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lessons include use of computers, internet and e-learning - extend set-up and feedback times, separate feedback for learning from tech debrief 	<input type="checkbox"/> Mix of both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mix live/online and or synchronous/asynchronous - Videoconference Skills Workshop (VSW) - Media Skills Workshop (MSW)
Extended ISW An ISW where additional resources and <u>activities are accessed before and after</u> the ISW	ISW+ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - additional resource binders - pre/post activities in person 	ISW+ Online <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - additional resources and activities are online 	<input type="checkbox"/> Mix of both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - resources are printed and/or electronic - activities are online and/or F2F
Online/Virtual ISW Practice teaching with a <u>focus on online/distributed learning</u> and student-centred outcomes	Classroom for Online Instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lessons are delivered in multiple remote classrooms, or computer labs to simulate online learning - feedback and discussion are facilitated live, online 	Online for Online Instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lessons, feedback and theme sessions all delivered using online methods/tools - synchronous or asynchronous 	F2F and Online ISW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - explore online learning principles - polysynchronous: participants access learning synchronously and asynchronously; - hybrid: some learners participate in the classroom and some are online, e.g. to facilitate accessibility.

Definition of Terms: The Learning Landscape

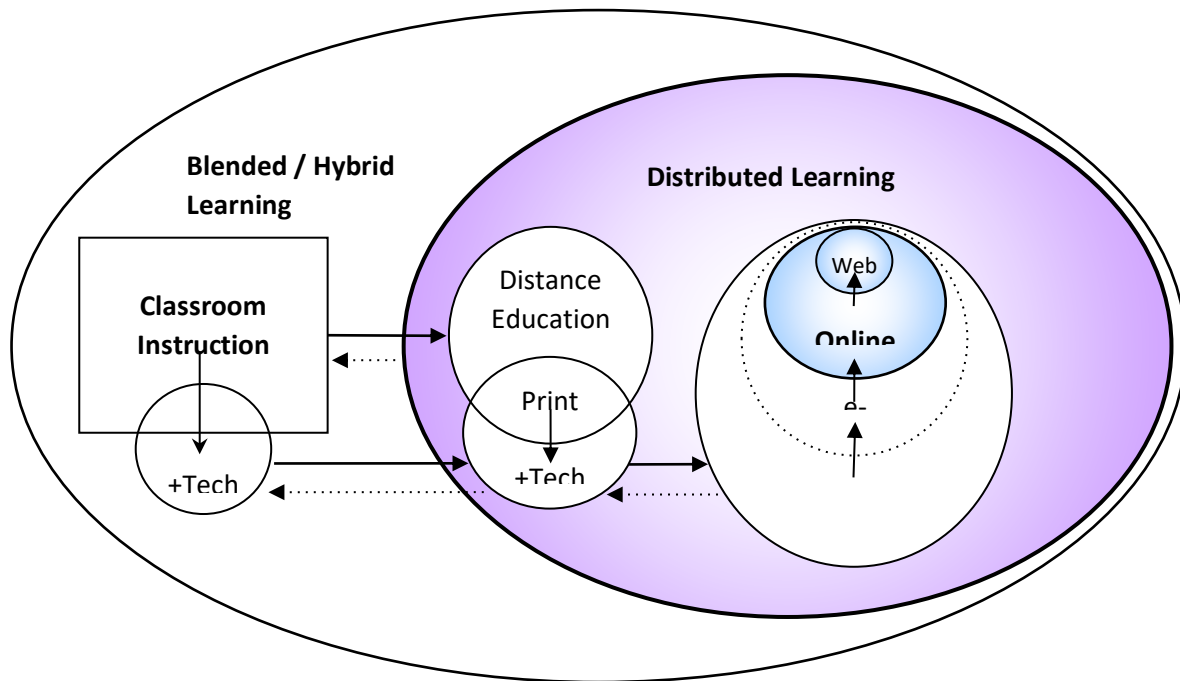


Figure 2. Key distinctions: Terms used to describe different instructional media, modes and methods (Doherty, 2002)

The purpose of these definitions is to make distinctions so we can discuss where ISW fits, rather than to force any single meaning for each term, because the terms are used differently over time, e.g. virtual originally referred to computer-based activities, but now is used to mean online activities:

Classroom Instruction	Instructor(s), learners, content and physical learning aids are all in the same space (face to face) at the same time (synchronous).
- with instructional technology	- audio, video, computer slides, web sites or other electronic audiovisual media support learning in the classroom
Distributed Learning:	Instructor(s), learners, content and learning aids may be in different places (remote) at different times (asynchronous)
Distance Education - print	Deliver content and learning aids as print packages by mail
- with instructional technology	- audio, video, computer slides, web sites or other physical and electronic audiovisual media support learning
Computer-based (virtual)	Pre-prepared learning materials accessed via computer
- e-learning	Self-paced learning materials accessed via computer/internet
- online / mobile (internet)	Accessing materials and communicating via network or internet Accessible seamlessly via cell or WiFi on a mobile device
- web (application on internet)	Accessing materials and communicating via world wide web

Blended Learning

A mix of classroom and online learning (everyone does both)

- hybrid or polysynchronous learning

- a mix of instructional modes (e.g. some people in-class, some online; or some self-study, some group, some instructor-led)

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