

The Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW)

The Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) takes a highly participatory approach as groups examine their values and practices related to teaching or training and learning. It generally runs 24 to 30 hours and may be conducted in a variety of formats. The ISW

- uses a developmental peer approach to the enhancement of teaching and learning.
- encourages active, experiential learning and is based on principles of learning-centered instruction; the instructor is viewed as a facilitator of learning.
- raises the awareness of, appreciation of, and sensitivity to the many individual differences – visible and invisible – learners bring to any learning environment.
- is suitable for both new and experienced educators/trainers.

Goals:

In an ISW, participants will have opportunities to:

- work closely with peers to develop increased competence and confidence as facilitators of learning.
- practice a variety of instructional strategies and techniques.
- increase awareness of participatory learning processes.
- learn from colleagues in an informative, fun, and interactive environment.
- apply professional reflection to continuously improve practices.

More specifically, participants will experience and/or practice:

- develop learning outcomes or expressive outcomes to guide lesson planning and inform learners of expectations.
- consider the variable needs/preferences of learners.
- create lesson plans inclusive of all core lesson elements.
- facilitate participatory lessons.
- utilize instructional media and resources competently.
- use questions and question sequences effectively during a lesson.
- apply formative techniques to assess for learning.
- give and receive constructive feedback.
- plan for application and reinforcement of learning outside the ISW learning setting.

ISW, ISW-Blended & ISW-Virtual Participant Testimonials @ Keyano College:

- “The ISW program gives you a chance to challenge yourself in a safe environment.”
- “I feel much more confident in my teaching abilities at the end of [the ISW program]. Having never taught in a classroom before it helps relieve some anxieties.”
- “It [ISW-Blended] adequately prepares instructors for effective teaching and accommodating different student learning styles.”
- “The course [ISW-Blended] was well structured with very professional and engaging facilitators. I was able to learn and practice instructional techniques and strategies in a safe environment and become more confident as an instructor.”
- “As a new instructor, it is hard to know if you are on the right track. Are students getting what they need from your class? Are you doing what you need to be doing as an instructor? What resources are out there to help? These are the questions that were answered for me and now I feel I have the necessary skills and confidence to fulfill my role.”
- “It [ISW-Blended] a great learning opportunity that teaches you how to create a positive learning environment for both the teacher and the student. You learn from both perspectives as the teacher and as the learner.”
- “It [ISW-Blended] gave me new tools to put into my instructing tool belt and allowed me to take risks in a controlled environment to preview how they would work in actual classes.”
- “The ISW-Blended program is the perfect combination of online learning and face-to-face sessions. The length of the course allows you to deeply engage with the course content, apply it in your mini-lessons and get feedback on your performance so you can improve even further.”
- “It [ISW-Blended] will revolutionize the way you view yourself and your role in the classroom. You will grow your skills as a teacher and learn many tools for use with your students, to enrich their learning experience here at Keyano.”
- “It [ISW-Virtual] is an excellent opportunity to reflect on and improve teaching practice, gain new strategies and insights, and grow as an instructor.”
- “The facilitators were engaging, encouraging, and fostered an environment that was safe for us to take risks and learn. It [ISW-Virtual] was very well put together, and the facilitators took risks as well to model the same behaviour. I felt this really spoke to me on a learner level and encouraged me to do the same.”

For more information on the ISW program, check out www.iswnetwork.ca

Reference:

Instructional Skills Workshop Network Executive. (April 2021). *The Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) Handbook Part One: Workshop Overview*. Licensed under <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>