



The Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) Network Description

Prepared by ISW Network Executive
Team Updated January 2020
www.iswnetwork.ca

Copyright © January 2020 Janice B. Johnson on behalf of the ISW Network Executive Team

This document may be downloaded or electronically shared with others in its entirety with all attribution information retained.



The Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) Network Description

Preamble

A very successful professional development initiative for educators, the Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) was created in British Columbia, Canada in 1979. Since then, hundreds of educators have served as ISW Facilitators in colleges, institutes, universities, polytechnics, hospitals, government departments, nonprofits, and training organizations around the world. A number of these ISW Facilitators have also completed the Trainer Development Workshop (TDW) to prepare themselves as FDW Trainers, qualified to offer the Facilitator Development Workshop (FDW).

Nomenclature around ISW can be confusing. When we refer to the ISW Program, we are including the three levels of workshops/training (ISW, FDW, TDW). This document has been compiled to provide some clarity around what constitutes an ISW, an FDW and a TDW. It is hoped this may assist with efforts to ascertain the outcomes of the program and their “equivalent” in credit granting agencies of higher education around the world.

The ISW Network of facilitators and trainers is a vibrant, generous community of colleagues engaged collaboratively in enhancing learning through workshops, reflective practice, and the scholarship of teaching and learning. This Network is supported by the ISW Network Executive Team, the ISW International Advisory Committee, Local Representatives from each ISW Team, and by facilitators and trainers who volunteer to assist with ISW events and projects. This document outlines key features of the ISW Network and describes ways ISW Facilitators and FDW Trainers can participate in the growing ISW global community.

Further information about the ISW Program and the ISW Network is available at <http://iswnetwork.ca/>.

Table of Contents

1. What is the ISW?.....	5
2. Essential Components of an ISW.....	5
3. What is the FDW?	7
4. What is the TDW?.....	7
5. Other ISW-related Models.....	8
6. ISW and Further Education.....	8
7. ISW Network Members.....	9
8. Supporting the Network: Executive Team, Advisory Committee, ISW Sustainability Plan, Local Representatives, Listserv, Website, Facilitator and Trainer Registry.....	9
9. ISW Network: Local Representatives, Regional Activities and Cross-Regional Participation.....	11
10. ISWs Around the World.....	11
11. Using Certificates and Logos.....	12
12. Events Sponsored by the ISW Network.....	14
13. Quality Assurance: Who is Responsible for ISW/FDW/TDW?.....	14
14. Handbooks.....	15
15. References and Literature on ISW.....	15
16. Contacting Us.....	15

1. What is the ISW?

Description

The Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) is designed to encourage reflective practice and to assist participants in developing their teaching and feedback skills. The underlying principles of the workshop include: participatory learning, diversity of learning, adult learning, and the building of learning communities in classrooms and institutions. A handbook of resources is provided to augment the workshop.

After successfully completing the 3 or 4 day workshop (24 hours), participants receive a certificate of completion recognized by many Canadian and international institutions. Participants also benefit from joining a network of colleagues who are committed to self-discovery and continual improvement of teaching and learning. Interested participants can become facilitators of the Instructional Skills Workshop by taking the 5 day Facilitator Development Workshop (FDW), and becoming part of a team responsible for delivering and supporting the ISW and related activities at their institution or organization.

History and Evolution

The ISW was first developed in British Columbia, Canada in 1979 as a response to an expansion of new colleges and the need for professional development programming for both new and experienced instructors. The ISW was designed initially by Doug Kerr, then of Vancouver Community College and supported by Diane Morrison of the then British Columbia Ministry of Education. It has been enhanced collaboratively over time by many members of the ISW Network. The ISW has since grown and expanded across Canada as well as into the United States and many other countries.

ISW is a nonprofit initiative and is supported by ISW Facilitators and FDW Trainers who provide time and expertise to support the regional and cross-regional activities of the ISW Network. The ISW Network Executive Team, with assistance from the ISW International Advisory Committee and others, coordinates professional development events for ISW Facilitators and FDW Trainers and maintains an international listserv and website. For more information, visit <http://iswnetwork.ca/>.

2. Essential Components of an ISW

Widely recognized as a model for peer-based instructional development, the ISW is designed to strengthen instructors' skills through intensive and practical exercises in

learning-centred teaching. Mixing opportunities for small and larger group interaction, the ISW engages participants in:

- planning and delivering 10 minute lessons
- developing participatory instructional techniques
- listening actively
- learning and teaching collaboratively
- modelling adult learning principles
- generating effective feedback and discussion

During the 24 hour workshop period, (generally offered over three or four days), each participant conducts 10 minute lessons (three in total) in a small group of no more than six people, and receives oral, written and video feedback on each lesson. Everyone attending the workshop is video recorded, and feedback is constructive. On Day 1 of the ISW, the facilitators spend a considerable amount of time establishing a safe learning environment for all participants. Team building and group activities are an important part of establishing a learning community conducive to exploring one's teaching strategies.

Participants are also sent information, in advance of the ISW, outlining the "Six Elements of a Lesson," a lesson planning model that is helpful as a starting point for discussions on instructional design and delivery. Participants may choose any topic that appeals to them but are encouraged to teach something not related to their disciplines or areas of instruction, at least on the first day, so the group can focus on the instructional design process rather than the content of the lesson.

Each teaching/feedback cycle is 40 minutes long, consisting of a 10 minute set up period, a 10 minute instructional period, 5 to 7 minutes of written feedback by the group while the participant and facilitator debrief, and a 13 to 15 minute group feedback process. The instructional cycles are interspersed with small group discussion (sometimes with larger group discussion if more than one group is running simultaneously) on teaching-related questions such as learner motivation, facilitating groups, assessment issues, teaching/learning styles, and other topics identified by the participants. Each workshop participant presents a total of three 10 minute lessons, one lesson per day. Participants are encouraged to reflect on their own learning and that of others, and to incorporate new understandings into the next day's lessons.

The end of the workshop focuses on a celebration of the strengths of each of the participants. As the ISW is a developmental model, the facilitators work hard to en-

sure that each member of the group is able to reflect on individual strengths, areas of opportunity for growth, and how these skills can best be incorporated into the classroom or training context. Participants are also encouraged to explore further professional development opportunities after the Instructional Skills Workshop concludes, as continuing learning is an essential feature of the ISW program.

3. What is the FDW?

The Facilitator Development Workshop (FDW) focuses on preparing participants to facilitate or lead the ISW. While the ISW is a 24 hour event, the FDW trains facilitators over 40 hours, generally a 5 day period, embedding the 24 hour ISW so participants can practice their facilitation skills within this model. FDW participants complete three cycles of teaching, three cycles of facilitating, and 9 to 12 cycles of feedback to instructors on their teaching as well as 9 to 12 cycles of feedback to new facilitators on their facilitation skills, all guided by one or two FDW Trainers. In addition to learning the elements that underpin the ISW, FDW participants learn to video record instructors, manage time and group processes to create effective learning environments, arrange all necessary logistical elements, and facilitate the feedback cycle.

Many FDW participants find facilitating the ISW to be the most challenging and rewarding work they have done in a workshop context. Successful completion of the Facilitator Development Workshop requires a willingness to lead by example – modeling the behaviours and attitudes that will allow their (future) ISW participants the space to develop their teaching and learning expertise. At the end of the FDW, the participant receives an ISW Facilitator certificate signed by members of the FDW training team. New facilitators are asked to co-facilitate their initial ISWs with more experienced facilitators and to participate in ongoing developmental activities as members of a supportive ISW team at their institution or organization.

4. What is the TDW?

The third level of the tier is the Trainer Development Workshop (TDW) where individuals (trainer trainees) who have completed the Facilitator Development Workshop and who have led several Instructional Skills Workshops, develop their skills to offer the Facilitator Development Workshop. Such individuals may become FDW Trainers through one of two processes:

- The trainer trainee works collaboratively as part of the training team running the FDW and is mentored into the role of FDW Trainer as the workshop un-

folds.

- The trainer trainees attend a 4 to 5 days (24 to 30 hours) TDW where they work with FDW Trainers to develop their facilitator training skills. Cycles include practicing facilitation and practicing training, combined with several cycles of feedback on both the facilitator and trainer role.

At the end of either process, the trainer trainee receives an FDW Trainer certificate signed by members of the TDW training team. New FDW Trainers are asked to co-train with an experienced trainer, especially when first offering Facilitator Development Workshops. However, it is general practice for all TDWs to be offered as a co-training model, either by 2 trainers or by a very experienced trainer working with one or, on rare occasions, two trainer trainees.

Whereas the ISW is a developmental activity, the FDW and TDW are skill based and generally require considerable practice and feedback. Experienced trainers work with new facilitators and with new trainers to identify readiness to offer these second (FDW) and third (TDW) tiers of the ISW program.

5. Other ISW-related Models

Over the years, other workshops related to the ISW have emerged to serve specific purposes. For example, there is a Presentation Skills Workshop (PSW), which focuses on the delivery of information (such as in conference presentations) rather than on design of lessons. Another variation is the Narrative Skills Workshop (NSW), which explores the role of storytelling and narrative in teaching and learning.

Members of the ISW community have also developed online and blended options of ISW, focusing on delivering portions of the ISW online and/or developing skills for teaching online. For more information about some of the variations on the ISW model, visit <https://iswnetwork.ca/isw-models/>.

6. ISW and Further Education

In Canada, participants who have successfully completed an ISW are eligible for advanced placement, transfer credit, or prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) in several certificate, diploma and degree programs. Some ISW Facilitators who have completed the Facilitator Development Workshop (FDW) and Trainer Development Workshop (TDW) have negotiated transfer credit on a case-by-case

basis into advanced post-secondary educational programs (e.g., Masters degree programs) in such fields as education and leadership. See <https://iswnetwork.ca/about/isw-and-further-education/>.

For information about some other related learning options, see the ISW website at: <http://iswnetwork.ca/other-learning-options/>.

7. ISW Network Members

The ISW Network is an informally linked international affiliation of facilitators and trainers who have completed initial training (FDW and TDW) and who participate in their own ongoing development to offer the ISW model and processes for the enhancement of teaching and learning. Most of these facilitators and trainers are members of a local team offering ISWs at their own institution or organization. Some continue as independent facilitators and trainers after moving to another institution or organization that doesn't offer the ISW program, becoming independent consultants, and/or retiring but remaining interested in ISW Network activities.

8. Supporting the Network: Executive Team, Advisory Committee, ISW Sustainability Plan, Local Representatives, Listserv, Website, Facilitator and Trainer Registry

The ISW Network Executive Team, members of the ISW International Advisory Committee and others provide support, guidance, and leadership to encourage members of the ISW Network to work together to achieve the ISW vision. The Executive Team is currently comprised of 4 individuals: Janice Johnson, Jill Grose, Nancy Sly and Diane Morrison. Contact information for the Executive Team is on the ISW Website at: <https://iswnetwork.ca/about/executive-and-committee/>.

The ISW International Advisory Committee is currently comprised of several individuals from across Canada and other countries. Their names and contact information are available on the ISW website at: <https://iswnetwork.ca/about/executive-and-committee/>. The Advisory Committee meets with the Executive Team 2 or 3 times a year, usually online, to advance the work of the Network, much of which is done within smaller task groups. Members of the ISW Network Executive Team, the ISW International Advisory Committee and various task groups volunteer their time to support the Network.

In late 2019 we introduced the ISW Sustainability Plan, which outlines ways to develop greater capacity and participation amongst members of the Network. We are

soliciting Local Representatives (LRs) from all institutions and organizations that have ISW Teams. The LRs will liaise with the Executive Team members to enhance communication across the global ISW Network. The LRs will also provide supporting, coordinating or participating roles in professional development and other events offered at a local or regional level. For more information about the ISW Sustainability Plan, see <https://iswnetwork.ca/isw-sustainability-plan/>.

The ISW electronic discussion list is a closed Listserv for use by ISW Facilitators and FDW Trainers. This is the primary way the Executive Team and other members of the ISW Network share information about ISW related events and activities and we encourage all ISW Facilitators and FDW Trainers to be Listserv members. The ISW Listserv is not a busy one, but occasionally we do have extended discussions on a specific topic. Individual ISW Facilitators and FDW Trainers can submit a request to join the Listserv at <https://iswnetwork.ca/resources/isw-listserv/>. When facilitators complete the FDW, the trainer for that FDW should send an email with a list of names and contact information to the Listserv Manager at support@iswnetwork.ca.

The ISW website aims to provide information on ISW activities both within Canada and globally. Considerable information about the ISW and the Network is available at <http://iswnetwork.ca> with public access. The website also houses resources related to facilitation and training of the ISW model, which are password-protected and obtainable by ISW Facilitators and FDW Trainers. Individuals who have completed the FDW can request access to this password-protected area by submitting the Request an Account Form and the Facilitator & Trainer Questionnaire. Facilitators must complete this two-part Registration process prior to being granted access to the password-protected area and prior to being added to the published list of ISW Facilitators. You can read more about the registry process at the following link: <https://iswnetwork.ca/facilitators-and-trainers/isw-facilitators-and-trainers-survey-we-invite-you-to-respond-2/>.

Qualified individuals can be included on the published list of ISW Facilitators by indicating their interest on the web-based Facilitator & Trainer Questionnaire. If facilitators later complete the TDW, they can submit the details of their TDW to the email address provided on the webpage with this Questionnaire. At that time, qualified individuals can indicate their interest in being included on the published list of FDW Trainers.

Any ISW Facilitator or FDW Trainer who has a change in their contact information (e.g., email, geographical location, affiliation with an ISW team) is asked to submit

their new contact information to the email provided on the webpage with the Facilitator & Trainer Questionnaire. Facilitators and Trainers who have a change in their contact information should also send the new contact information to the ISW Listserv Manager at support@iswnetwork.ca.

9. ISW Network: Local Representatives, Regional Activities and Cross-Regional Participation

The ISW is built upon the philosophy of shared collaborative input. Anyone who has become an ISW Facilitator can take a leadership role in supporting the Network.

As mentioned earlier, we are working on a comprehensive identification of Local Representatives (LRs) from local ISW teams to assist with communication about ISW across the expanding ISW global community. Independent ISW Facilitators and FDW Trainers are encouraged to connect with LRs in their geographical area. In some areas, independent facilitators and trainers may also decide to create small informal groups and select their own Local Representatives for this initiative.

As part of this comprehensive approach to community-building across the ISW Network, the Executive Team encourages Local Representatives to collaborate with other ISW teams at sites within their general geographic area. The ISW Sustainability Plan includes expanding the availability of regional activities for ISW Facilitators regardless of their geographical location across the globe. The Executive Team also encourages Local Representatives to facilitate the participation of their ISW team members in the occasional offering of ISW cross-regional events and projects. More information about the roles and responsibilities of the Local Representatives (LRs) can be found at: <https://iswnetwork.ca/roles-and-responsibilities-of-local-representatives/>.

10. ISWs Around the World

Since the inception of the program in the late 1970s, the ISW has been introduced into numerous countries beyond Canada. The Executive Team regularly discusses international initiatives and ways to promote the building of the ISW model in countries around the world, in collaboration with the Local Representatives at the various ISW sites. The Executive Team continually seeks ways to encourage members of the ISW Network to foster respect for cultural traditions and approaches in teaching and learning across the ISW global community while upholding the values of learning-centred teaching at the heart of the ISW program.

Countries where Instructional Skills Workshops have been offered are listed alphabetically below within geographical clusters. Although the ISW has been offered within many countries, ISW is not necessarily currently offered in each of the places listed below.

North America: Canada, Mexico, United States

Caribbean & Central America: Bahamas, Cuba, Jamaica

South America: Brazil, Chile, Guyana, Peru

Africa: Ghana, Namibia, South Sudan, Tanzania, The Gambia

Middle East: Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, United Arab Emirates

Eurasia: Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Russia

Europe and the United Kingdom: Finland, Switzerland, England

Asia: Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong, India, Pakistan, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam

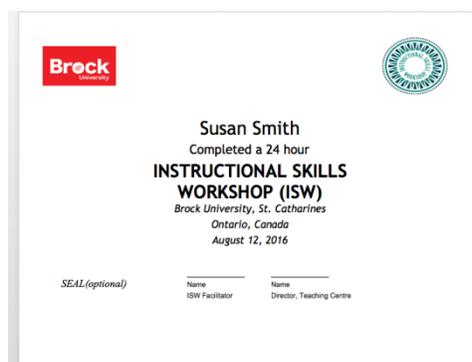
We continue to build the database of ISW offerings around the world. If you are an ISW Facilitator or FDW Trainer who has offered an ISW, FDW or TDW at an institution or organization that is new (or returning) to the ISW Network, please use the email address on the ISW Around the World webpage at <https://iswnetwork.ca/about/isw-around-the-world> to provide information about the workshops you offered.

11. Using Certificates and Logos

ISW

Each team of facilitators that offers ISWs at their own institution or organization is responsible for the design and issuance of its own certificate. The certificate should be signed by a member of the ISW team at the local institution or organization. Facilitators can access the ISW logo for inclusion on their local team's certificates through the password-protected section of the ISW website. Facilitators must have an account to access these resources and can read more at: <https://iswnetwork.ca/facilitators-and-trainers/isw-facilitators-and-trainers-survey-we-invite-you-to-respond-2/>.

The following sample certificate is used at Brock University:



When certified facilitators offer ISWs at other institutions (e.g., where the ISW is not yet an established program), the certificate can show both the ISW logo and the logo of the institution where the ISW is being offered. The ISW Facilitators offering these workshops sign the certificate. A representative of the institution offering the ISW can also sign the certificate if that is desired by the host institution.

FDW and TDW

Institutions and organizations are able to offer ISWs and issue certificates with the ISW logo once they have an established team of recognized ISW Facilitators. These institutions and organizations are also able to offer FDWs and TDWs by recognized Trainers, though these are held less frequently and may involve inviting trainers from other areas to offer the FDW or TDW.

When certified trainers offer FDWs or TDWs at their own or other institutions, the certificate should have the ISW logo and the logo of the host institution. The certificate should state that the individual is completing the ISW Facilitator Development Workshop or the ISW Trainer Development Workshop. The ISW, FDW and TDW certificates are recognized by the ISW Network Executive Team when they are signed by recognized ISW Facilitators or FDW Trainers, and hosted by an institution or organization that the Executive Team knows is offering ISWs or is interested in establishing an ISW program.

12. Events Sponsored by the ISW Network

The ISW Network Executive Team, with support from members of the ISW International Advisory Committee and others, occasionally coordinates events such as the inter-institutional, multi-group FDW held most years in Vancouver, British Columbia. At this multi-group FDW, participants from other countries often participate to become facilitators so they can offer the ISW program at their own institutions. This FDW is directed by senior members of the ISW Network and also provides an opportunity for some experienced ISW Facilitators to complete the Trainer Development Workshop process. For this event, the Certificate for completion of the FDW and TDW is issued under the auspices of the ISW Network rather than by a host institution. These Certificates are signed by the Trainers and by a member of the ISW Network Executive Team.

The Executive Team also occasionally coordinates professional development events open to all interested ISW Facilitators. These events are planned and co-facilitated by two (or more) members of the ISW Network and provide opportunities for discussion of shared practices and emergent themes related to our work as facilitators and trainers. Events have been held for many years at a location close to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada over a weekend in October or November. Other longer events (3-4 days) are usually held in June at a location somewhere in Canada. In 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2018, an ISW June Institute was held at the Five Oaks Retreat Centre in Paris, Ontario. In 2015, it was held at a sister location in Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia. In 2017 and 2019, June Institutes were held in British Columbia.

These and other events for ISW Facilitators from sites around the world are promoted through the ISW website and the ISW Listserv, usually with the announcement of a call for a planning committee for the event. These events for ISW Facilitators are usually residential involving both daytime and evening activities.

13. Quality Assurance: Who is responsible for ISW/FDW/TDW?

The ISW is the foundational activity of a “grass roots” informal network of peers devoted to the development of sound instructional practices in the post-secondary educational environment and in various training programs in other types of organizations. Many of the facilitators and trainers offer ISW and related activities in collaboration with post-secondary teaching and learning centres, continuing education and/or international education departments; others are individuals who work in human resource development to introduce instructional training programs in a variety

of business and industry sectors.

The ISW is a nonprofit organization and, as such, those who offer it cannot use it to generate revenue, other than the fees that may be levied by facilitators and trainers to account for their time. Fees for facilitation or training are set by the individual facilitators themselves, and many facilitators simply receive honorariums to cover their time away from their jobs.

The Network of facilitators and trainers is responsible for oversight of how ISW is conducted and supported. For this reason, FDW Trainers sign the certificates of new ISW Facilitators so there is accountability to the Network for mentoring those new to offering ISWs.

14. Handbooks

The delivery of each ISW and FDW is supported by a handbook written by members of the Network and copyrighted by a member of the ISW Network Executive Team on behalf of the ISW Network. The ISW and FDW Handbooks are each meant as a supplementary resource to the workshops and are usually distributed at the workshops, not before, so the contents can be contextualized with respect to the experiences of the participants. The ISW Handbook has been translated into various languages including French, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Mandarin. The FDW Handbook also has some translations available. These handbooks are available on the password-protected section of the ISW website that can be accessed by facilitators and trainers who are on the ISW Facilitator and FDW Trainer Registry.

15. References and Literature on ISW

Much of the literature pertaining to ISW is shared at networking conferences in an informal way. However, the number of resources and research studies related to the delivery of ISW and its impact on teaching and learning is growing. For a list of some of these references, visit <http://iswnetwork.ca/about/isw-program-in-context/>.

16. Contacting Us

We are happy to answer any questions you might have about the ISW Program and the ISW Network.

Please contact any member of the ISW Network Executive Team at the email addresses listed at <https://iswnetwork.ca/about/executive-and-committee/>.