

The Course Design Intensive - Teaching and Learning Professional Development Team

Project type: workshop

The Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology's [Course Design Intensive](#) (CDI) is a 3-day workshop during which participants work, individually and collaboratively, to design or redesign a course they are (or will be) teaching. Participants are UBC instructors of all ranks, including graduate students. Occasionally, participants include instructors from other institutions.

The CDI workshop has been held since 2009. It is offered twice a year (in the spring and in the winter) to approximately 20 participants per Intensive. It is currently facilitated by a team of CTLT educational developers and has undergone a major redesign in the past 2 years.

CDI Learning Outcomes

By reflecting on their course and engaging with peers and course activities, participants have an opportunity to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Approach the design of their course from a learning-centered orientation.
2. Apply principles of alignment to develop learning outcomes and select assessment methods and learning activities.
3. Assess various learning activities and technologies for their value in supporting the learning outcomes they have developed and propose how these may be incorporated into their course design.
4. Engage in peer learning as a means of enhancing their teaching practice and student learning.

Goal

Our evaluation goals were:

- A. To examine whether the Course Design Intensive (CDI) is meeting its intended outcomes.
- B. To explore which concepts and approaches have been most valuable to participants.
- C. To explore shifts (pre- vs. post- CDI) in participants' assessments of their course design skills.
- D. To explore shifts (pre- vs. post- CDI) in participants' confidence about their course design skills.
- E. To find out how CDI graduates have applied what they learned in the CDI to their own teaching, 5-6 months post-CDI.

Methodology

Evaluation began in 2015. We approached our evaluation of the CDI with the intention of exploring what value, if any, the CDI offers (Bamber & Stefani, 2015); this, in contrast to an approach that attempts to 'measure impact'.

We engaged in various data collection methods, in addition to the formative feedback collected at the end of the first and second days of the workshop.

Data collection methods were:

Summative Feedback: This anonymous online survey included a range of questions about participants' experiences. It was completed on the last day of CDI.

Pre- and Post- Surveys: The pre- and post- survey questions aimed to detect how participants perceived their own changes in confidence levels and skills with respect to the learning outcomes. These were anonymous online surveys completed 1 week prior to and at the end of day 3 of the CDI.

Focus Group: In this face-to-face group meeting, past participants learned and shared if and how they had applied concepts from the CDI to their course design practice. These were held 4-6 months post CDI.

Findings

To date, and based on participants' self-reports, we have learned that:

1. The CDI learning outcomes are being met.

Evidence: Themed data from the summative feedback and focus groups indicates that the CDI learning outcomes are being met (read detailed report [here](#)).

2. The course design concepts participants considered most important/valuable are: backward design and alignment. Peer-to-peer feedback and facilitator feedback best enabled participants' learning.

Evidence: Themed data from the summative feedback indicates these concepts were most valuable and important (see p.6 in [detailed report](#)).

Most important thing I learned from the CDI (participant reports):

Concept	% of Total Responses
Backward design	30%
Alignment	25%

Components of the CDI that contributed most to my learning:

Component	% of Total Responses
Feedback from peers	77%
Feedback from facilitators	72%

3. Participants believed the CDI has been helpful in augmenting their course design skills. The majority of participants found the CDI particularly helpful in enhancing their skills to:
 - a. approach the design of their course from a learning-centered orientation (90% of participants indicated the CDI had been very helpful or extremely helpful)
 - b. apply principles of alignment to develop learning outcomes and select aligned assessment methods and learning activities. (94% of participants indicated that the CDI had been either very helpful or extremely helpful)
4. Overall, respondents felt more confident about their ability to apply course design principles to their own teaching. As compared to the pre-survey responses, there was a notable shift from “not/slightly/somewhat confident” to “very confident” and “extremely confident” (See figures 1-4 on pages 11 and 12 of [detailed report](#))
5. Follow-up conversations with participants indicated that they applied their learning from the CDI in various ways, which included how they design their course, modifying learning outcomes, and student engagement. Participants noted:
 - big ideas helped focus the course goals and learning outcomes
 - backward design used to plan course
 - more attention put on articulating relevance of course to students and on incorporating student experience
 - better understanding of role of learning outcomes in teaching
 - greater appreciation for iterative nature of course design

Recommendations

Project: The CDI would be improved by increasing the focus on assessment of student learning. Less than 10% of participants indicated that assessment was one of the key takeaways from the CDI (however 30% and 25% respectively indicated that backward design and alignment were among the most important concepts they learned and it is possible that assessment was included in that). Given the importance of assessment in teaching and learning, a stronger emphasis on assessment would be beneficial to participants.

Future evaluation: Future evaluations should also include data collection methods that do not rely exclusively on participant self-reports; for example, we could analyze syllabi or course goals in light of the CDI learning outcomes.

For participants: Participants who benefit the most from the CDI are those who have set aside time, during the week, to work intensively on their course. When participants can dedicate significant time on the Tuesday and Thursday between the CDI course days, they can make good progress on their course design or redesign.

Reference

Bamber, V., & Stefani, L. (2016). Taking up the challenge of evidencing value in educational development: from theory to practice. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 21(3), 242-254.

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Additional Information

Program Evaluation Pre-Survey:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B9A0dhBpdepFSEw4Vm5ZQU50bnM?ths=true>

Program Evaluation Post-Survey

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B77x_hAuEbWgMi1leFltRINnSzA/view?usp=sharing

Summative Evaluation

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B77x_hAuEbWgTV8yYmh5X0hKQVE/view?usp=sharing

Retrospective Pre-Survey and Post Survey

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UOQNBonN5ZVMEqS62h3YbSQ_95nfdJntu4HeBzTxj98M/edit?usp=sharing

