

Summary Evaluation of IBL Workshop for Instructors of Pre-Service Elementary Teachers

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The IBL workshop for math faculty who teach pre-service elementary teachers was conducted in a virtual format over the course of 4 days spread across 2 weeks (June 1-10, 2020). The workshop included a mix of general IBL and topic-specific components. For evaluation, we treated this as a traveling workshop because it was similar in contact time (8 hours) but additional questions were added to the standard traveling workshop survey in order to capture information about the unique format and content. Of the 20 total participants, 16 completed the post-workshop survey for a response rate of 80%.

The majority of survey respondents rated the workshop as “excellent” in each of the following categories: length and spacing of sessions (73%), appropriateness of technologies chosen for activities (73%), working in virtual pairs (73%), overall quality (67%), emphasis on IBL for pre-service teachers (67%), and design of workshop for online learning (67%).

A majority of participants likewise noted self-reported gains in knowledge (80%), skill (73%), interest in incorporating IBL methods into their teaching practice (73%), interest in learning more about IBL (67%), and belief in effectiveness of IBL (60%).

Open-ended responses show that many respondents were drawn to the workshop because of its topical focus. A majority of participants (77%) reported having prior experience teaching an IBL course and comments indicate that several participants wanted to learn more about specifically incorporating IBL into courses for pre-service teachers. Several participants noted a desire to work and exchange ideas with other faculty who teach this type of course.

When asked what aspects of the workshop were best, participants most frequently cited collaborating with fellow faculty. They also noted that the facilitators effectively structured the workshop, included well thought-out activities, and modeled the practices they were teaching. There was less agreement on which aspects of the workshop most need to be improved. A few participants cited specific technical difficulties, such as not being able to locate certain links or not having timing notifications in breakout rooms on the first day. Two participants noted that the pre-work took substantially longer than the time estimates indicated. Otherwise, the feedback indicates no major issues to be fixed.

Overall, the feedback for the workshop was very positive. Participants particularly appreciated being able to connect with other faculty who are teaching the same kind of course as well as the workshop activities related to teaching for pre-service elementary teachers. This indicates that the topical focus of the workshop was beneficial for participants. Comments likewise indicate that the online format worked well, particularly the use of breakout rooms to facilitate smaller group discussions. The 4-day format with break days in-between seems to have also been effective with 73% of participants rating the length and spacing of sessions as “excellent” along with a lack of open-ended comments about timing issues, which is noteworthy because “feeling rushed” is often seen in both IWS and TWS feedback.