**Evaluation & Research Services**



Faculty of Extension

Contents

[Background 3](#_Toc333221794)

[Method 3](#_Toc333221795)

[Executive Summary 4](#_Toc333221796)

[Results 5](#_Toc333221797)

[Overall Results 5](#_Toc333221798)

[Participant profile 5](#_Toc333221799)

[CTL Programming and Service Impact 6](#_Toc333221800)

[Ongoing Support 8](#_Toc333221801)

[Results by Position 12](#_Toc333221802)

[Participant profile 12](#_Toc333221803)

[CTL Programming and Service Impact 14](#_Toc333221804)

[Ongoing Support 15](#_Toc333221805)

[Appendix 17](#_Toc333221806)

[Online Survey 17](#_Toc333221807)

# Background

The University of Alberta’s Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) provides educational leadership and supports excellence in teaching throughout the university community.

CTL provides:

* Practical resources and tools including a central learning management system (eClass Moodle)
* Research-informed recommendations
* Pedagogical support from qualified experts who care about teaching

The Centre for Teaching and Learning has previously undertaken ongoing summative evaluation activities designed to assess the quality of existing programming. CTL decided to expand the scope of those evaluation activities to further examine program quality and impact, as well as the programming needs of key audiences within the University community. Evaluation and Research Services worked in collaboration with CTL to conduct the evaluation and needs assessment activities required. An online survey was then created to gather needs assessment data to inform the development and refinement of CTL’s services; as such, the intended audience was a sample of faculty members and graduate students at the U of A. The survey also included a series of evaluative items for those individuals who have previously made use of CTL services.

# Method

Evaluation and Research Services administered an online survey comprised of a number of scale and profiling questions, in addition to several qualitative questions intended to gather more in-depth comments from respondents. Current faculty members and graduate students were invited to participate in the surveys via email. The survey was live from June 22 to July 6, 2012.

The following data summary includes results from both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis from the survey. Quantitative analysis consisted primarily of descriptive statistics. Where possible, a content analysis was performed on the qualitative data, and participant comments were coded into various response categories.

In several cases, the original five point scale in the surveys was collapsed in order to increase the clarity of the data for reporting purposes. Scales were collapsed into “bottom two box” and “top three box” scores. Bottom two box scores represent the percentage of respondents who selected responses that are considered negative, taken from the bottom portion of the five point scales. Top three scores represent the percentage of respondents who selected responses that are considered positive.

Comparisons were made between three different types of participants: professors (encompassing professors, associate professors, and assistant professors), sessional academics, and graduate students. Cross tabulations were used to compare the different participants. Chi-square tests, median tests, and one-way ANOVAs were conducted at an alpha level of 0.05 to find whether the differences reflected statistical significance.

# Executive Summary

At the time of the survey, the majority of respondents (86%) taught their courses face-to-face, and Moving Online, Teaching Orientation, and the Symposium Series were the most used CTL programs or services. With that in mind, participants’ satisfaction with CTL was quite high, with less than 15% indicating that they were unsatisfied with its programming and services or that they would be unlikely to recommend CTL to a colleague.

Nearly three-quarters of respondents indicated that they had attempted to modify their teaching practice as a result of CTL’s programming and services, and close to 100% maintained these changes after their initial implementation. The most prominent change to course content or teaching style was new or increased use of e-learning software, with 61 of 141 open-ended comments pertaining to this sort of change.

The majority of survey participants preferred online materials and/or workshops as a means to access support for future instruction, while engaging students, encouraging critical thinking and appraisal, and improving student assessment were deemed the most important professional development topics. In addition, the applicability of content, quality of instructors, and small, hands-on classes were the features of CTL sessions that garnered the most positive feedback from respondents, while session length and pacing, time and location, and, interestingly, large class sizes were the features most commonly cited as requiring change.

Professors were more likely to use the Moving Online and Teaching Orientation programs than were graduate students, but otherwise the use of CTL programming and services was similar among professors, sessional academics, and graduate students. Similarly, there were no significant differences in course delivery modes, satisfaction and likelihood to recommend, attempts at changes in teaching practices, or the continuation of changes in teaching practices among members of the three positions. However, graduate students were more likely to prefer print materials and student discussion panels for support, were more interested in instructional strategies for large classrooms, and were somewhat more interested in how to evaluate their teaching and give effective feedback than were professors and sessional academics.

# Results

## Overall Results

Participant profile Slightly more than one third (38%) of respondents were professors; 14% were sessional academics, and 25% were graduate students. The remaining 23% of the participants were administrative assistants, APOs, lab instructors and coordinators, post-doctoral fellows, and support staff, among others.

***Figure 1: Position Description (n = 241)***

Respondents’ age was evenly distributed with a slightly higher number of participants aged 55 or over. Those respondents teaching at the university or college level had been doing so for a median of 7 years and at the University of Alberta for a median of 4 years.

***Figure 2: Age (n = 242)***

The vast majority (86%) of participants taught their courses using a face-to-face method; just a few (13%) taught courses face-to-face with a significant online component or fully online.

***Figure 3: Course Delivery Mode (n = 197)***

Moving Online, Teaching Orientation for new and early career faculty members, and the Symposium Series were the most used CTL programs or services.

***Figure 4: CTL Programming or Services Used***

CTL Programming and Service Impact Satisfaction with CTL was quite high; most participants (88%) were satisfied with the programming and services offered by CTL, and almost as many (87%) would recommend CTL’s services to a colleague.

***Figure 5: Satisfaction and Likelihood to Recommend CTL***

While more than two thirds (71%) of respondents attempted to make changes in their teaching practice as a result of their experience with CTL’s programming and services, virtually all (98%) continued to incorporate these changes into their teaching practice.

***Figure 6: Incorporating Changes into Teaching Practice***

Survey respondents who indicated that they had altered their course content or teaching style were asked to provide examples of how they had done so. Nearly half of all responses indicated that participants had increased their use of course management software such as Moodle. Other widely cited themes included general changes in pedagogy, a greater focus on learning outcomes, and a stronger emphasis on student engagement and interaction. See Table 1 for a comprehensive thematic breakdown.

***Table 1: Modifications to Course Content or Teaching Style***

| Category of Comment | # of Responses | Exemplary Comments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| More Use of E-Learning | 61 | * Become more proficient at navigating Moodle. * I started using online course tools (most recently Moodle) after taking a course on the tool. |
| New Instructional Strategies | 21 | * I have considered multiple learning styles and their associated teaching/activity styles. * Teaching using more modern techniques. |
| Focus on Learning Objectives | 14 | * I made the course content consistent with the course objectives. * Evaluated and changed assignments to better reflect desired learning outcomes. |
| Encourage Student Engagement, Interaction | 12 | * I have modified my lecture style to be more interactive. * New teaching methods (e.g. strategies to increase classroom engagement - 1 minute papers). |
| New Assessment Methods | 9 | * Changed exam question style and content. * Trying to be sure that the assessment tools I use are appropriate for the material that was presented. |
| More Technology Use | 8 | * Incorporated more technologies, used them more effectively, linked with competencies. |
| Develop/Follow Course Outlines | 6 | * Prepared lectures in a way so that I cover all topics mentioned in the course outline. * The construction of course outlines & syllabi. |
| Modified Feedback | 4 | * As a teaching assistant for a seminar where the main objective is to guide students to write and revise an essay, I found the advice about providing feedback very useful. It helped me to better understand the tone (not too positive when the work was not well done) and the amount of feedback that students find most useful. |
| Other | 6 | * I am more self aware and more aware of my students reception. * I have more empathy for students and try to be more understanding when dealing with their issues. |

Participants who indicated that they had been unable to sustain the changes in their teaching practice were asked to describe some of the barriers that had prevented them from doing so. Responses were rather disparate, ranging from “class sizes and teaching subject” to “cost and convenience” to “lack of extra time”. However, one recurring theme was that respondents did not find CTL seminars useful, with 12 of 33 comments indicating this was the case.

Ongoing Support When participants were asked to describe some ways in which CTL could support their instruction, responses were again quite heterogeneous. Many comments focused on increasing the number and availability of seminars, and similarly some pertained to the scope of content offered by CTL; for instance, a few respondents wished to see more content geared toward teachers who already possess advanced knowledge of online teaching. Several responses pertained to the importance of support services, while others were concerned with seeing more strategy-based, rather than merely technical, training.

Most survey participants would prefer to access support for future instruction via online materials and workshops focused on specific instructional techniques or targeted at the respondent’s discipline. A student discussion panel is the support access method least likely to be used.

***Figure 7: Preferred Support Access Format for Future Instruction***

Most professional development topics listed are of interest to respondents, with student engagement, critical thinking, and student assessment improvement being the top 3 topic areas selected. Incorporating community service learning into the course was deemed the least interesting area.

***Figure 8: Interest in Potential Topic Areas for Ongoing Professional Development***

Survey participants were requested to describe some emerging trends in education that CTL should address through future programming and services. Once again, the disparity of responses made a complete content analysis unfeasible. However, a few general themes did emerge. The most cited trend was the increased use of e-learning, while other themes included the pervasiveness of social media, a greater focus on student engagement, the necessity for evidence-based approaches when prescribing various technologies, increasing class sizes, and greater use of mobile devices in teaching and learning.

When asked to explain what they liked best about the CTL sessions they had attended, the most prominent theme was the practicality and usefulness of the sessions. The quality of the instructors also received numerous comments, followed by the availability of individualized instruction and the hands-on approach.

***Table 2: What Respondents Liked Most about CTL Sessions***

| Category of Comment | # of Responses | Exemplary Comments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Useful Content | 29 | * Concrete ideas that I have gotten that I can implement in my classes. * Encouraging and realistic tips. Instead of feeling overwhelmed with more to do, I left feeling empowered that I could implement some changes. |
| Instructors | 26 | * Instructors were knowledgeable and enthusiastic. * The instructors have generally been very motivated and eager to provide any assistance that they can. |
| Small Classes, Individualized Instruction | 16 | * The relatively small groups that have permitted extensive consultation with the instructors. * In Moodle levels 1 and 2 (and other Moodle sessions), staff took the time to answer all my questions (and I'm a needy student!). |
| Hands-On Approach | 15 | * Computers were provided to allow us to work with Moodle. * The workshop type attitude. |
| Organized, Clear, Effective | 11 | * Effective, clear and concise instruction. * The course was nicely broken down into learning "chunks". |
| Networking, Collaboration | 10 | * Meeting colleagues for different disciplines and understanding how they developing their instruction techniques. * Mix of people and ideas. |
| Short, Convenient | 9 | * Short 1-2 hours courses that fit into my schedule. Offered in spring and summer, when staff have time to learn. Courses offered in term Sept-April, often conflict with other duties/class/lab times. |
| Take-Home Materials | 6 | * Had effective handouts that we could use as reminders when we actually started building the courses. |
| Other | 27 | * I have enjoyed the special-topic symposia and Pedagogical Provocations. * Made me think about some ideas that I have never directly focused on. |

Respondents were requested to identify one thing they would change about the CTL sessions they had attended. The most frequent theme involved session length and pacing, with many participants wishing to see longer and/or slower-paced sessions. Session availability and location was another major theme, as was class size and individualized instruction.

***Table 3: What Respondents Want Changed About CTL Sessions***

| Category of Comment | # of Responses | Exemplary Comments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Length/Pacing | 14 | * Presenter crammed too many topics and spoke too fast. * Make the sessions longer. |
| Time/Location | 11 | * More online seminars (learning on my schedule). * Have the computer workshops at different locations across campus. * There are interesting sessions offered over the summer that I am unable to attend because of field research: could they be offered in early morning or evening sessions during the school year? |
| Smaller Class/More Helpers | 11 | * Have more instructors/helpers available. * After large-group introductory sessions, all subsequent workshops should be smaller in size. |
| Scaffolding | 9 | * Actually enforcing the prerequisites - the higher-level sessions I attended regarding Moodle spent far too much time going over the basics that should have been previously covered in the prereq courses. * It would be good to offer training for Moodle or anything technology-based separately for those who have better understanding and mastery of computers and online software. |
| More Follow-Up | 8 | * By necessity, there was an enormous amount of information being given about Moodle ... having an easy to navigate website for post-session consultation would have been useful. * I would like access to some of the teaching materials used on an ongoing basis so that I could refer to them when needed in the future. |
| Consider Audience | 7 | * Have CTL speak and present at the department/faculty level to capture a greater range of instructors, in terms of experience - improving teaching techniques should be for all level of instructors, not just junior level. * Target a wider audience of people involved in teaching students. Many NASA staff are involved in teaching students, as are adjuncts, graduate students, sessionals, clinicians, and post-docs. |
| More Hands-On | 5 | * Time allotted for meaningful hands on activities. It would be nice if I could work on my real course |
| More Discussion, Sharing | 5 | * Give more time for discussion of new teaching ideas and materials * More personal interaction. |
| Other | 15 | * Don't talk down to the people who attend. You scare people off by preaching pedagogy. There is a science and you can teach that, but recognize that there is an art to teaching and cultivate that. * Having free food! But I'm a grad student, so I'm a little biased when it comes to free food. * Make it compulsory e.g. for chairs or coordinators. |

## Results by Position

Participant profile While the age profiles of participant professors and sessional academics in the survey were quite similar, with a median age ranging from 40 to 50 years, graduate students tended to be younger, as expected, with a median age of 25 to 35 years.

***Figure 8: Age***

Professors who recently participated in CTL courses or programs have been teaching for about 15 years, 10 of those at the University of Alberta. Sessional academics have between 6 and 7 years of teaching experience at either the University of Alberta or any other institution, and graduate students have even less teaching experience, having spent only one or two years in front of a classroom.

***Figure 9: Median Years of Teaching Experience***

CTL programming and services use was quite similar among the three different positions, except for the Teaching Orientation and Moving Online programs, with professors being more likely to use them than graduate students.

***Figure 10: CTL Programming or Services Use***

There were no significant differences in terms of the course delivery modes used by professors, sessional academics, and graduate students.

***Figure 11: Course Delivery Mode***

CTL Programming and Service Impact Satisfaction and likelihood to recommend are equally high among the three different academic positions.

***Figure 12: Satisfaction and Likelihood to Recommend CTL***

Professors, sessional academics, and graduate students had all similarly attempted to make changes in their teaching practice as a result of their experience with the CTL, and all of the three groups continued to incorporate these changes in their teaching practice.

***Figure 13: Changes in Teaching Practice as a Result of CTL Experience***

Ongoing Support Graduate students were more likely than professors and sessional academics to prefer print materials and student discussion panels to access instructional support.

***Figure 14: Preferred Support Access Format for Future Instruction***

Graduate students were more interested in instructional strategies for large classrooms than professors and sessional academics. Graduate students were also slightly more interested in learning how to evaluate their teaching and how to give effective feedback, while they are less interested in understanding how to develop learning outcomes.

***Figure 15: Interest in Potential Topic Areas for Ongoing Professional Development***

# Appendix

### Online Survey

**PARTICIPANT PROFILE**

**Which of the following best describes you?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Professor |
|  | Associate professor |
|  | Assistant professor |
|  | Sessional academic |
|  | Graduate student |
|  | Other (please specify:) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

**Age**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | 20-24 |
|  | 25-29 |
|  | 30-34 |
|  | 35-39 |
|  | 40-44 |
|  | 45-49 |
|  | 50-54 |
|  | 55 or over |

**For approximately how many years have you been teaching at the college or university level?**

**For approximately how many years have you been teaching at the University of Alberta?**

**Have you made use of the following CTL programming or services in the past 3 years?**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yes | No | Not sure |
| Teaching Enhancement Series |  |  |  |
| Travelling Teaching Enhancement Series |  |  |  |
| Teaching Orientation for new and early career faculty members |  |  |  |
| Peer Consulting |  |  |  |
| Symposium Series |  |  |  |
| Moving Online |  |  |  |

**Approximately what percentage of your courses do you teach in each of the following delivery modes?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Face-to-face |  |
| Fully online |  |
| Blended (Face-to-face with a significant online component) |  |

**CTL PROGRAMMING AND SERVICE IMPACT**

**In general, how satisfied are you with CTL’s programming and services?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Not all satisfied (1) | (2) | Somewhat satisfied (3) | (4) | Very satisfied (5) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

**How likely are you to recommend CTL’s programming and services to a colleague?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Not all likely (1) | (2) | Somewhat likely (3) | (4) | Very likely (5) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Have you attempted to make changes in your teaching practice as a result of your experience with CTL’s programming and services?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Yes |
|  | No |

**In what way have you altered your course content or teaching style? Please provide specific examples if possible.**

**Do you continue to incorporate these changes into your teaching practice?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Yes |
|  | No |

**What are some of the barriers that prevented you from implementing or sustaining changes in your teaching practice?**

**ONGOING SUPPORT**

**What are some ways in which CTL could help support your instruction?**

**How likely would you be to access support for your instruction in the following formats?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Not all likely (1) | (2) | Somewhat likely (3) | (4) | Very likely (5) |
| Print materials |  |  |  |  |  |
| Online materials |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1-on-1 consultations (i.e., peer observation and coaching) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Informal group discussions, with colleagues, about instructional practices |  |  |  |  |  |
| Workshops (specific instruction targeted at your discipline) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Workshops (focused on specific instructional techniques) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Guest lectures |  |  |  |  |  |
| Student discussion panels |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other (please specify in the space below:) |  |  |  |  |  |

**How interested are you in the following potential topic areas for ongoing professional development opportunities?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Not all interested (1) | (2) | Somewhat interested (3) | (4) | Very interested (5) |
| Incorporating technology into your courses |  |  |  |  |  |
| Student-centered instruction |  |  |  |  |  |
| Improving student assessment |  |  |  |  |  |
| Fostering critical thinking and critical appraisal |  |  |  |  |  |
| Incorporating opportunities for undergraduate research |  |  |  |  |  |
| Evaluating your teaching |  |  |  |  |  |
| Engaging students |  |  |  |  |  |
| Instructing “millennial” students |  |  |  |  |  |
| Inclusive instruction |  |  |  |  |  |
| Developing learning outcomes |  |  |  |  |  |
| Incorporating community service learning into your courses |  |  |  |  |  |
| Giving effective feedback |  |  |  |  |  |
| Instructional strategies for large classrooms |  |  |  |  |  |
| Instructional strategies for online learning |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other (please specify in the space below:) |  |  |  |  |  |

**What are some of the emerging trends in education that CTL should address through future programming and services?**

**What did you like the best about the CTL sessions you have attended?**

**What is the one thing you would change about the CTL sessions you have attended?**