



# Guiding pedagogical change: an implementation template for effective faculty development

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## ***Abstract***

This communication presents the Implementation Template developed for a faculty development workshop at the Educational Development and Quality unit of the Copenhagen Business School (CBS), Denmark. The workshop focuses on the implementation of research-based strategies to enhance student learning. The template, shared in this piece for the learning development community to use or adapt, was designed to support faculty by prompting reflection, guiding peer conversations, and identifying relevant strategies to better support student learning in specific teaching contexts. The template has proved to be effective to help faculty self-assess their teaching practice and develop feasible implementation plans for learning enhancement in their courses.

**Keywords:** faculty development; research-based learning strategies; reflection; peer discussion; pedagogical patterns.

## ***Main communication***

Since 2022, the authors have been running a three-hour faculty development workshop titled 'Supporting Student Learning in Your Course', based on James Lang's book *Small teaching: everyday lessons from the science of learning* (2021). The book's balance between research and practical applications aligned with the authors' goal of using learning sciences research to enhance faculty's pedagogical knowledge, known to play a critical role in helping teachers make informed decisions that lead to more efficient student

learning (Guerriero, 2017). In the workshop, faculty explore and plan the implementation of a series of research-based learning strategies, such as retrieval and spaced practice, and get introduced to Lang's 'small teaching' approach, which consists of achieving significant positive impact on student learning by means of small changes (i.e., requiring minimal preparation) in their courses (Lang, 2021). The workshop is attended by faculty from all academic departments in the institution, which means that a broad range of disciplines (e.g., finance, marketing, law) and levels of study (e.g., undergraduate, postgraduate) are represented.

The workshop developed from a 90-minute webinar on the same topic run for faculty in the wake of COVID-19, when many were still working partly from home. The feedback from faculty on the use of research-based content and the 'small teaching' approach had been very positive, but the webinar format presented some limitations. Participants wished to have more time to reflect on their own teaching and plan the implementation of the presented strategies. With these evaluations in mind, we set up to design the current workshop.

The design of a three-hour face-to-face workshop was not just an opportunity to extend the time we had in the webinar, but an opportunity to create resources that provided teachers with the necessary guidance to reflect on their teaching methods, engage in deeper discussions with peers, and plan the implementation of learning strategies, bearing in mind the specific characteristics of their students and courses. This resulted in the design of the Implementation Template, shared here for readers to use in its original version or as inspiration to create their own template for faculty development in their institutions.

The Implementation Template (see Appendices 1 and 2) was inspired by Diana Laurillard's pedagogical design patterns which function as a template where teachers document and share their teaching design pattern, understood as 'a semi-structured description of an expert's [teacher] method for solving a recurrent problem, which includes a description of the problem itself and the context in which the method is applicable' (Laurillard, 2012, p.7). The Implementation Template supported the core activities of the workshop, incorporating the idea of pedagogical patterns to guide participants in the integration of the learning strategies suggested by Lang into their teaching contexts. Thus, one template focused on the strategies to enhance students' acquisition of foundational knowledge (i.e., predicting,

retrieving, interleaving) and another one on the strategies to promote deep understanding and transfer of knowledge (i.e., connecting, practising, explaining).

Each template consists of two parts. Part One of the template (see Appendix 1) guides faculty to plan the implementation of learning strategies within the specific context of one of their courses. Prompt questions are provided to help participants reflect upon the reasons for choosing a specific strategy ('Why have you chosen this strategy?') and the expected learning enhancement ('What do you hope to achieve with it?'), and to consider a feasible implementation plan ('How would you implement it?'), its potential challenges ('Can you foresee any challenge in the implementation?'), and a possible method to evaluate effectiveness ('How would you evaluate the impact on student learning?'). This is meant to help faculty develop a solid rationale for the changes they are planning to introduce, focusing on student learning and keeping in mind the need for revising the design once it is implemented.

Part Two of the template (see Appendix 2) facilitates a peer conversation in pairs, where faculty take turns explaining their implementation plans and making comments and suggestions to each other. Drawing inspiration from Lave and Wenger's coined term of 'communities of practice', this peer conversation was meant to create a space for reflection and discussion of practice, where participants would share and help each other refine their teaching designs (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Moreover, these interactions harnessed the benefits of collaborative learning, such as considering different perspectives, enhancing critical thinking, and developing relations with peers.

The use of the template has resulted in detailed implementation plans that faculty have produced and shared in the workshops. This process aligns closely with Laurillard's concept of pedagogical design patterns. By guiding participants to reflect on their teaching practices, engage in peer dialogue, and draft actionable plans, the template supports the iterative design process central to effective pedagogy (Laurillard, 2012). The impact of this resource has also been measured through the feedback questionnaire participants completed after the sessions. One question specifically addresses the use of the Implementation Template in the workshop: 'In two of the activities, you used a template that was meant to help you draft feasible and concrete implementations of some strategies and to encourage reflection on teaching practice through a peer conversation. Do you feel the template was useful to achieve this? Do you have suggestions to improve it?'

Faculty's feedback on the templates has been consistently positive. Teachers have highlighted the template's usefulness in formulating the implementation plans more clearly, sparking reflection on how to develop the strategies introduced in the workshop, and supporting meaningful dialogue with peers.

In this workshop, the Implementation Template provides a structured approach for faculty to plan and discuss the integration of research-based learning strategies into their courses, but we believe the template could be easily adapted for any type of faculty development session aimed at fostering peer collaboration and enhancing student learning, such as improving assessment practices, creating further feedback opportunities, or fostering belonging and engagement. The planning process and the peer conversation supported by the template align with some of the key aspects that have been shown to foster reflective teaching and the continuous improvement of teaching and learning, such as collegial feedback and self-reflection (Brookfield, 2017). This alignment also makes the template a useful resource for learning developers, who can use it to encourage reflective practices in faculty workshops.

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## **Appendix 1**

### Implementation Template: Part One.

<p><b>PART ONE</b></p> <p><b>Select ONE strategy</b></p> <p>PREDICTING                      RETRIEVING                      INTERLEAVING</p>
<p><b>COURSE/CLASS INFORMATION</b></p>
<p><b>IMPLEMENTATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why have you chosen this strategy?</li><li>• What do you hope to achieve with it?</li><li>• How would you implement it?</li><li>• Can you foresee any challenge in the implementation?</li><li>• How would you evaluate the impact on student learning?</li></ul>

## **Appendix 2**

### Implementation Template: Part Two.

#### **PART TWO**

#### **PEER CONVERSATION IN PAIRS**

Take turns to complete both A and B.

##### **A. Presenting:**

- Explain your implementation plan (Part One) and answer questions from your peer.
- Listen and respond to his/her comments and suggestions.

##### **B. Listening and making suggestions:**

- Listen carefully to your peer's explanation and ask questions if necessary.
- Make comments or suggestions (e.g., do you foresee other challenges in the implementation? Can you think of other ways of evaluating the impact on student learning?).