



**NAASS Member:** University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

**Initiative Title:** Preparing Faculty to Flex their Teaching Strategies and Approach

**Award Category:** Shift to Virtual Learning

**Description:**

Recognizing the need for flexibility and the ability to move rapidly online and plan for multiple modalities, UWL developed and offered a 2-week online "Flex" training in summer 2020 to prepare for fall courses. The training was offered in the university's LMS, Canvas, and augmented with Collaborate Ultra to host live webinar sessions each week. In contrast to the idea of developing a fully online class for students who want a virtual experience, the Flex training was aimed more at preparing high quality course materials for flexible modalities. A survey of faculty conducted in late spring indicated an instructor desire for a better awareness of how to teach online effectively. The flex training used instructor and student responses to surveys from spring to reflect, justify, and articulate the need for evidence-based practices in courses.

In addition, the flex training drew heavily on examples of quality instructional approaches that were used by UWL faculty in spring 2020 and highlighted in an early summer event called Teaching in a Crisis Symposium. Using examples of quality work from faculty helped focus on flexible yet attainable approaches in preparing for fall. In addition to the inclusion of more faculty facilitators, the Flex training employed a cohort model associated with interest areas such as first-year students, labs, language learning, visual/performing arts, lecture based, seminar based, and writing intensive classes. Over 350 faculty completed this training, resulting in over 90% being trained in flexible or online course delivery methods and approaches before fall 2020.

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