

HOW TO ORGANIZE A CAMPUS-WIDE COURSE REDESIGN PROGRAM USING NCAT'S METHODOLOGY

VII. Preparing Teams to Submit Strong Proposals

Successful redesign requires developing a detailed plan for improving learning outcomes and assessing the results of that plan. Faculty are generally unfamiliar with quantitative assessment strategies that facilitate comparison between traditional and redesigned formats and that demonstrate improved student learning as a result of the redesign efforts. However, with assistance, faculty can develop assessment plans that establish baseline data and compare learning in the traditional courses with learning in the redesigned courses.

Successful redesign also requires developing a detailed plan for reducing instructional costs. The process includes cost analyses of the traditional course and the redesigned course. The analyses provide a clear context for understanding how an institution uses its resources (human as well as other resources) and for determining how those resources might be more effectively deployed for greater benefit to all. Teams need to work collaboratively to assess the kinds of tasks that must be carried out by faculty, tasks that can be done by effective use of information technology, and, finally, tasks that can be done by people other than faculty. Again, faculty are generally unfamiliar with costing strategies that allow comparison between traditional and redesigned formats and that document reduced instructional cost as a result of redesign efforts. However, with assistance, faculty can develop cost reduction plans that establish baseline data and that compare costs in the traditional and redesigned courses.

In both cases, redesign teams need to work in consultation with the program leaders to come to understand how to accomplish both tasks. Workshop discussions and individual consulting sessions help teams identify methods they can use to implement a successful assessment plan and a successful cost reduction plan.

NCAT's method for supporting projects during the proposal development process is an iterative one. We share the proposal requirements during the first workshop. Then, responding to the readiness instrument forces teams to make at least tentative decisions about the project plan. Sharing plans during the second workshop and partially completing the Cost Planning Tool (CPT) is yet another step in fleshing out a proposal. When it becomes time to develop the full proposal, many of the steps have already been taken; and teams have received feedback on their ideas.

Conduct Workshop II: Developing the Course Redesign Proposal

The project leaders should conduct a one-day planning workshop for the course redesign teams. All teams interested in submitting a final proposal should be *required* to participate in a second workshop that emphasizes further planning.

Why: The reasons are to give them feedback on their completed readiness responses and the CPT drafts (described later), to introduce them to additional innovative course redesign practices, to give them feedback on their tentative course redesign ideas, and to prepare them to complete final proposals.

Require Teams to Complete Workshop Homework

The project leaders should require workshop participants to read the following prior to the workshop.

- [How to Redesign a College Course Using NCAT's Methodology](#)

This how-to guide is designed for those who want to improve learning and reduce costs in all sections of a single course in any academic area other than mathematics. The guide describes how to implement NCAT's course redesign methodology with a view to increase student success and reduce instructional costs. Those considering a redesign in mathematics should read [How to Redesign a College-Level or Developmental Math Course Using the Emporium Model](#) or [How to Redesign a Developmental Math Program Using the Emporium Model](#), as appropriate.

- Redesign Case Studies

NCAT has provided the higher education community with almost 200 case studies of redesigns that both improved learning and reduced costs. (See http://www.theNCAT.org/PCR/Proj_Success_all.html.) The case studies are sorted by discipline, redesign model, and degree of success. Participants should read those case studies in the discipline of the course they intend to redesign and in the model they intend to use.

- [Increasing Success for Underserved Students: Redesigning Introductory Courses](#)

The [Increasing Success for Underserved Students](#) report examines the impact of the redesign techniques developed by NCAT's Program in Course Redesign on the success of adult students, students of color, and low-income students.

Why: The reason is to deepen understanding of course redesign, to prepare for the content of the workshop and for the homework assignments, to make the workshop a more productive and meaningful experience, and to encourage the consideration of new approaches as teams begin to develop redesign plans.

Participants should also be required to complete three tasks *as a team* prior to the workshop. Doing so gives them a taste of the redesign process, gets them started on their final proposals, and makes the workshop a more productive and meaningful experience.

1. Submit a draft of sheet 1 (the summary of personnel costs) and the top half of sheet 4 (the annual cost of the traditional course) of the Cost Planning Tool (CPT).

Teams should submit the draft to the program leaders one week prior to the workshop. During the workshop, project leaders should review the drafts and give some general feedback so that teams gain an initial understanding of how to complete the CPT correctly.

Why: This task gives teams practice in completing the CPT and enables them to understand how much it costs to offer the traditional course.

2. Submit a draft of sheet 1 of the Scope of Effort form, which analyzes who spends how much time on what in the course in its traditional format.

Teams should submit the draft to the program leaders one week prior to the workshop. During the workshop, project leaders should review the drafts and give some general feedback so that teams gain an initial understanding of how to complete the Scope of Effort form correctly.

Why: The Scope of Effort form has proved to be an important part of the course redesign process because it facilitates a team analysis of all of the instructional tasks in both the traditional and redesigned formats of the course. The exercise helps a team understand the various components of the course, consider components that can be changed and those that cannot, and analyze the sources of the costs of the course.

3. Prepare a five-minute summary of the choice of redesign model and how the team intends to implement “The Essential Elements of Successful Course Redesign” within that model.

For one part of the workshop, the program leaders should divide the participants into groups of eight, breaking up redesign teams, so that they can share ideas about models and principles and receive feedback on their ideas.

Why: We want teams to have developed an outline of what they intend to do at this point in the process, with the idea that their plans will be further refined after the workshop experience. We also want *each* member of the team to have an understanding of the redesign.

Conduct Workshop Sessions

Each of the following sessions on the workshop agenda should be conducted by an NCAT staff member and/or the program leaders.

Note: If you are new to course redesign, we recommend that you engage NCAT staff to conduct the Planning Workshop. During the first round of your campus-wide redesign program, the program leaders will learn a lot and become able to conduct this workshop in future rounds.

Review of Workshop Homework. This session gives redesign teams feedback on their completed readiness criteria and CPT workshop homework as well as guidance for future planning. In our review of readiness responses, we discuss each criterion and what we were looking for in teams’ responses (e.g., evidence of preliminary planning and evidence of a collaborative response). We give workshop participants an overview of the planned redesigns (e.g., course titles, choice of model); we assess the assessment methods and cost reduction strategies that participants have chosen; and we emphasize that in order to participate in the program, participants must have a valid cost reduction strategy because this is something a minority of teams typically resist doing. In our review of their draft CPTs, we present tables that compare each team’s cost-per-hour in the traditional course and ratios of in-class to out-of-class hours so that they can see whether their calculations are reasonable. And we provide additional instruction in how to complete the CPT.

Innovative Ideas for Course Redesign. This session engages participants in an interactive discussion of innovative redesign ideas. In it, we focus on two topics: New Instructional Roles and How to Create Small within Large—Chapters IV and VI of [How to Redesign a College Course Using NCAT’s Methodology](#). Participants should be seated at tables of eight. After a brief overview presentation by the workshop leaders, all tables should be asked to consider one of these innovative practices. Questions to be answered during this 45-minute period are, Do you think this is a good idea? Why or why not? If you were to implement the practice, what

benefits would it offer? What challenges would it present? What needs to be taken into account in implementing this practice? One person from each table should be chosen to speak for the group in the 30-minute report-back portion of the session.

Break-out Sessions: Course Redesign Plans. This session engages participants in an interactive discussion of their course redesign ideas. We again divide the participants into groups of eight, thereby breaking up redesign teams. Each team member presents a five-minute summary of the choice of redesign model and how the team intends to implement “The Essential Elements of Course Redesign” within that model. Other members of the small group provide feedback on the presenter’s ideas and gain new ideas for their own redesigns. These discussions also provide an opportunity for participants to ask questions they may have about the redesign process, which can be raised with workshop leaders in the final session.

Preparing the Final Proposal. This session discusses the content, format, and timeline for submitting final proposals. It also covers the NCAT and campus resources available to support proposal development. We require teams to prepare a final proposal according to a specified format comprising both narrative and forms. The final proposal format is described in Chapter XIII of [How to Redesign a College Course Using NCAT’s Methodology](#).

Why: We do this to make sure that plans get fully thought out and are complete, to establish comparability among projects in a particular program and among these projects and all NCAT course redesign projects, and to ensure that teams will begin to implement their plans as soon as grants are awarded.

A sample agenda and a list of the logistical tasks the program leaders need to do in preparation for the workshop are included in the appendices.

Provide Ongoing Consultation as Teams Develop Project Plans

As teams develop their full project plans, the program leaders should monitor progress in proposal development and provide individualized consulting for entire teams or individuals working on particular segments. This consulting can occur face-to-face or via email or telephone as desired by the participating redesign teams. NCAT Redesign Scholars can be helpful in this process.

Q: Why do we need to have another workshop? Why shouldn’t project leaders simply assign liaisons and meet individually with teams?

A: The workshop accomplishes so many things that individual meetings do not. Requiring *each* team member to make a five-minute presentation of course redesign ideas ensures that all team members are involved in planning at this stage of the process. Meeting individually with the team would likely lead to only the project leader’s presenting the ideas. At the workshop, teams benefit from learning how others are approaching their redesign plans, from seeing how others are complying with program requirements and how seriously they are taking the application process, from completing the homework and seeing how others completed it, from receiving feedback on the homework, and from hearing creative ideas about redesign from others that can strengthen their own plans, none of which would occur at individual meetings. Finally, the program leaders benefit from having direct knowledge of the work of all of the teams.

Q: What if a team doesn't do its homework?

A: We cannot know whether all members of a team complete the reading assignments, but we structure the other three tasks to ensure that they will be completed. One of the reasons for requiring submission of the CPT and the Scope of Effort form a week prior to the workshop is to be sure that each team does in fact do its homework. If you do not receive a submission from a team, project leaders should contact that team immediately to find out what's going on. It may be a sign that the team is not taking the process seriously or that the team needs help. You must make it clear that the team must complete the tasks or it will be dropped from the program. Finally, requiring *each* member of the team to make a five-minute presentation to peers ensures that all team members will be involved in planning at this stage of the process.

Q: I'd like to lead the workshop myself or join with NCAT staff and/or scholars to do so. What is the best way for me to prepare myself—because I'm new to the ideas also? What do I do if I don't know the answers to questions that come up about course redesign?

A: Most campus administrators are not knowledgeable about NCAT's course redesign methodology, and even those who are do not have specific experience with conducting course redesigns across multiple academic areas. NCAT is here to help you. We strongly recommend that you engage NCAT staff to conduct the Planning Workshop during the first round of your campus-wide redesign program. An alternative would be to engage one of NCAT's Redesign Scholars who has had experience in course redesign beyond his or her individual course. If you are interested in pursuing either alternative, please contact Dr. Carolyn Jarmon, NCAT vice president, at cjarmon@theNCAT.org.

If you decide to lead the workshop yourself, the NCAT website has an array of free resources for those seeking to implement a successful redesign, including for both two-year and four-year institutions. You should become especially familiar with Chapters IV, V, and VI of How to Redesign a College Course Using NCAT's Methodology. You should refer questioners to either the web resources or relevant Redesign Scholars, who are happy to discuss redesign questions via email or telephone. You should also feel free to contact NCAT if you have questions or for help in pointing people in the right direction.