



Ambit Pilot Evaluation

Review of Sessions 1-4, January-May 2023

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Summary

Ambit is a course on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the workplace, delivered through a series of four sessions. Ambit invites participants to consider diverse perspectives and to develop skills and behaviours that increase positive participation in society. The Social Innovation Lab was asked to assist with evaluating the pilot and moving the United Way toward being able to evaluate and monitor the program independently.

Key Findings

- The participants noticed and appreciated the implementation of feedback from session to session.
- Participants appreciated the resource binders that were provided with each session.
- Closed ended questions saw largely positive responses, particularly when reviewing facilitators and content.
- Participants suggested that a general interest in inclusivity may be a prerequisite for success in the course.

About United Way Saskatoon & Area <https://unitedwaysaskatoon.ca/>

The United Way of Saskatoon and Area works to improve lives and build community by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective action.

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John is an emerging evaluator whose focus is on working with the 2SLGBTQ+ community. John helped develop questionnaires, collected data for the pilot evaluation, and provided a summary of the findings.



Evaluation Background

Ambit is a course on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the workplace, delivered through a series of training sessions. At present, the pilot program includes four sessions which are each three hours in length. Ambit focuses on inviting participants to think about inclusion in new and different ways. This includes considering diverse perspectives and developing skills and behaviours that increase positive participation in society. The Social Innovation Lab was asked to assist with evaluating the pilot and moving the United Way toward being able to evaluate and monitor the program independently.

Table 1. Participant response rates by survey

Pre-Survey	51
Post Session 1 Survey	44
Post Session 2 Survey	32
Post Session 3 Survey	28
Post Session 4 Survey	19

This pilot evaluation provided weekly feedback to improve program delivery throughout the first iteration of the Ambit program, which took place in January 2023. Data was collected through five participant surveys. The first survey was completed before participants began the program and one survey was completed following each of the four sessions. The surveys assessed whether the program was having the intended impacts on participants, as well as their perceptions of the content and the facilitators. Table 1 shows the number of responses to each survey.

Findings

Participant Outcomes

Participant outcomes were measured using closed-ended questions to assess perceptions of progress on specific outcomes, including: confidence discussing issues around diversity; valuing diversity; and comfort responding to challenging situations. The pre-survey and post session four survey each assessed all outcomes while the surveys following sessions one through three focused on outcomes relevant to each session. Overall, participants showed some improvement on key outcomes measured through comparisons of the pre-survey and the post session four survey. Not all questions were comparable between the pre-survey and the post session four survey, but we have identified those that could be compared in Table 2. On average a greater percentage of participants agree or strongly agree that they value diversity and feel confident and comfortable responding to situations involving diversity on the post session four survey than on the pre-survey.



Table 2. Comparisons Between Pre-Survey and Session Four Survey using % responses

Question	Survey	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It is important to have empathy in the workplace/in my interaction with others.	Pre-Survey (n=51)	51%	41%	8%	-	-
	Post Session 4 Survey (n=19)	53%	37%	5%	-	5%
I consider myself to be quite self-aware (i.e., I understand how my beliefs and values influence my actions and behaviour).	Pre-Survey (n=51)	27%	65%	6%	-	-
	Post Session 4 Survey (n=19)	16%	74%	5%	-	5%
I value positive relationships in the workplace.	Pre-Survey (n=51)	65%	31%	4%	-	-
	Post Session 4 Survey (n=19)	47%	37%	11%	-	5%
I am confident when interacting with people of diverse backgrounds and varied needs.	Pre-Survey (n=51)	20%	55%	25%	-	-
	Post Session 4 Survey (n=19)	5%	74%	16%	-	5%
I am comfortable talking about my background and cultural experiences with my colleagues/others	Post Session 4 Survey (n=19)	32%	42%	16%	5%	5%
	Post Session 4 Survey (n=19)	32%	42%	16%	5%	5%
I feel like I can play a role in increasing feelings of inclusion for my coworkers/others	Pre-Survey (n=51)	33%	55%	10%	2%	-
	Post Session 4 Survey (n=19)	32%	58%	5%	-	5%

¹ Note the 5% who strongly disagreed across the post session 4 survey represents 1 participant who either misinterpreted the response options or who was disgruntled for unknown reasons.



Content Feedback

Questionnaire responses show an overall feeling among participants that the content was relevant, clear, and easily understood (see Table 3). Written feedback for session one produced several recommendations for future delivery, such as providing a general introduction to the course, including orientation to the space, course objectives, history of the course and why it matters, and the development of a group learning contract. While the material was useful and appreciated, two improvements suggested by participants include explaining the importance of meeting in a circle and spending less time on diversity within Saskatchewan. It is important to recognize that reducing focus on diversity may be useful if the group has previous experience with EDI training, but for a group with little previous experience this content is more useful. Participants also reported that tools and resources for continuous learning would be useful.

Session two was the only session where more participants responded as neutral or in disagreement with the questions regarding whether the material was relevant, clear, and easily understood. It is possible that the material felt less relevant for some people because they were unsure at this point how to apply the things they were learning—such as the ladder of inference—in the real world where everyone is not necessarily also practicing the same techniques. A participant pointed out that a lot of the material in the binder is not read directly during the session, and a second stated that it would have helped them to understand the material better if they had a chance to read it prior to the session.

Written feedback for session three was positive and participants appreciated the material. Some suggestions for increased detail included strategies for incorporating and practicing the learnings in daily life and how to practice empathy from a trauma-informed lens. Session four feedback provided more suggestions for improvement, including ensuring content ties into previous sessions, and that role-play be turned into an analysis of situations. Multiple participants reported disliking the role-playing activities. Participants also suggested that new scenarios could be created for session four rather than reusing scenarios from session two. The only item from the post session surveys for sessions one through three which showed less agreement was whether session one increased participants' knowledge of diversity in Saskatchewan. Only about two thirds of participants agreed that session one had increased their knowledge of diversity in the province. This may be because the first cohort had more experience with diversity than the average person, supported by the fact that some participants stated in their comments that less time could be spent on diversity in Saskatchewan.



Table 2. Comparisons Between Pre-Survey and Session Four Survey using % responses

Question	Survey	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The session material was relevant and clear.	Session 1 (n=44)	25%	66%	9%	-	-
	Session 2 (n=32)	9%	59%	28%	3%	-
	Session 3 (n=28)	21%	61%	11%	7%	-
	Session 4 (n=19)	26%	63%	5%	-	5%
The session material was easily understood.	Session 1 (n=44)	32%	59%	9%	-	-
	Session 2 (n=32)	19%	56%	25%	-	-
	Session 3 (n=28)	21%	71%	7%	-	-
	Session 4 (n=19)	21%	63%	11%	-	5%



Facilitator Feedback

Based on the questionnaires, the facilitators performed well (Table 4). Participants reported that facilitators encouraged participation, helped close out discussion, and were friendly across all four sessions of *Ambit*. The written feedback provided additional detail about the facilitator's performance. After the first session participants noted that the facilitators should divide the material to avoid interrupting each other, not rush through introductory materials, and provide a 2-minute warning for the end of breakout groups. Following the second session participants praised facilitators for taking their suggestions following the first session and suggested that a bell would improve the facilitator's ability to signal the end of break-out sessions. Participants preferred having both facilitators at the front of the room as in the third session, reporting that it was less distracting than having one on either side. Finally, after session four, participants thanked facilitators for their flexibility and engagement throughout the program.

Table 4. Facilitator Feedback by Session using % of respondents						
Question	Survey	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The facilitator brought forward new ideas and encouraged participation.	Session 1 (n=44)	32%	57%	11%	-	-
	Session 2 (n=32)	25%	59%	13%	3%	-
	Session 3 (n=28)	25%	61%	14%	-	-
	Session 4 (n=19)	21%	53%	21%	-	5%
The facilitator provided support and helped close out discussion.	Session 1 (n=44)	27%	61%	11%	-	-
	Session 2 (n=32)	31%	59%	9%	-	-
	Session 3 (n=28)	29%	57%	14%	-	-
	Session 4 (n=19)	26%	47%	11%	11%	5%
The facilitator was welcoming and friendly.	Session 1 (n=44)	57%	39%	2%	-	2%
	Session 2 (n=31)	52%	45%	3%	-	-
	Session 3 (n=28)	43%	46%	11%	-	-
	Session 4 (n=19)	42%	42%	11%	-	5%



Alignment with Session Objectives and Themes

Open-ended questions used in the post-session surveys demonstrated that participants understood key concepts from the Ambit sessions and were able to name tools and theories that the program sought to impart across the four sessions including: the ladder of inference; the importance of asking questions over making assumptions; self-reflection and self-care; and practicing positive responding (Table 5).

Table 5. Themes summarizing what stood out most from Ambit post-session surveys		
	Key Concepts Identified by Participants	Session Learning Outcomes
Session 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ladder of inference. Behaviour impacts perception. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Explore personal views and perspectives surrounding interactions. Examine how our values, thoughts, beliefs, and views shape behaviour. Explore the connection between values, behaviour, and inclusion. Identify skills and behaviours that support greater self-awareness.
Session 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask questions rather than making assumptions. Confidence influences interactions. Genuine interactions build good relations. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Explore personal views and perspectives surrounding interactions. Examine how our values, thoughts, beliefs, and views shape behaviour. Explore the connection between values, behaviour, and inclusion. Identify skills and behaviours that support greater self-awareness.
Session 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-care is important. Equitable relationships take work. Self-reflection on attitudes and practicing vulnerability is important. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits of building effective relationships Characteristics of positive and healthy relationships and Behaviours that influence the development of successful relationships.
Session 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills to handle awkward situations. Participants practiced self-reflection within the session leading to realizations about how they handle interactions. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how trust and vulnerability can influence feelings of awkwardness and discomfort in our interactions. Take the “personal” out of misunderstandings and differences. Learn how to respond positively in challenging situations.



Recommendations

Table 6. Evaluation recommendations.	
Ambit Program Recommendations	Rationale
Allow participants to read the binder material for the next session	Participants pointed out that some of the content in the binders is skipped over and they felt it would be helpful for their learning to have the option to pre-read material. Having this option would allow participants whose learning benefits from pre-reading to feel more prepared.
Swap out the session four role-play for scenario analysis	Participants identified that they did not like the role-playing in session four and felt there were more effective options to communicate this information. One suggestion was to analyze the scenarios in groups without role playing.
Include a certificate of completion	In addition to participants requesting a certificate, certificates are often required either by internal company policy or by licensing bodies for licensed professionals. Professionals may be required to complete a minimum number of training hours annually (such as social workers). It is helpful to include the number of hours of training the person received.
Ensure that content covered in session 4 is linked back to the previous sessions	Participants reported feeling a disconnect between session four and the first three sessions. Comments suggested that an overall conclusion to the course could help bring all four sessions together. Additionally, having overall course objectives or learning outcomes may help ensure a feeling of continuity.
Program Monitoring Recommendations	Rationale
Reword the pre-survey so that questions match the post session four questions	The wording changes to the post session four questionnaire have changed the meaning of the questions when compared with the pre-survey, meaning that the two questionnaires do not measure the same concepts. Wording of the questionnaires should be the same so a true pre-post can be conducted using the data. Currently, only a comparison of the data is possible.
Reword closed questions on all questionnaires to ensure that only one concept is assessed by each question	Currently, many of the questions contain “and” in the wording. When a question uses connectors such as “and/or” the question is connecting two different concepts which are assessed by the same scale. Since one question assesses two concepts, it cannot be known which concept the participant’s response applies to, and their reply may have been different if the two concepts were split into two questions.



Final Thoughts

Overall, the program was extremely well-received by participants as summed up by one participant:

The Ambit Learning Series Pilot was excellent. I thoroughly enjoyed every session and loved how engaging the facilitators were. My biggest take away is to remain curious, avoid assumptions, ask questions, and listen with intent. Inclusion is attainable if we approach others with curiosity, open mindedness, and a genuine heart.

