Revamping Pathways: A Collaborative Curriculum Refresh at ELI

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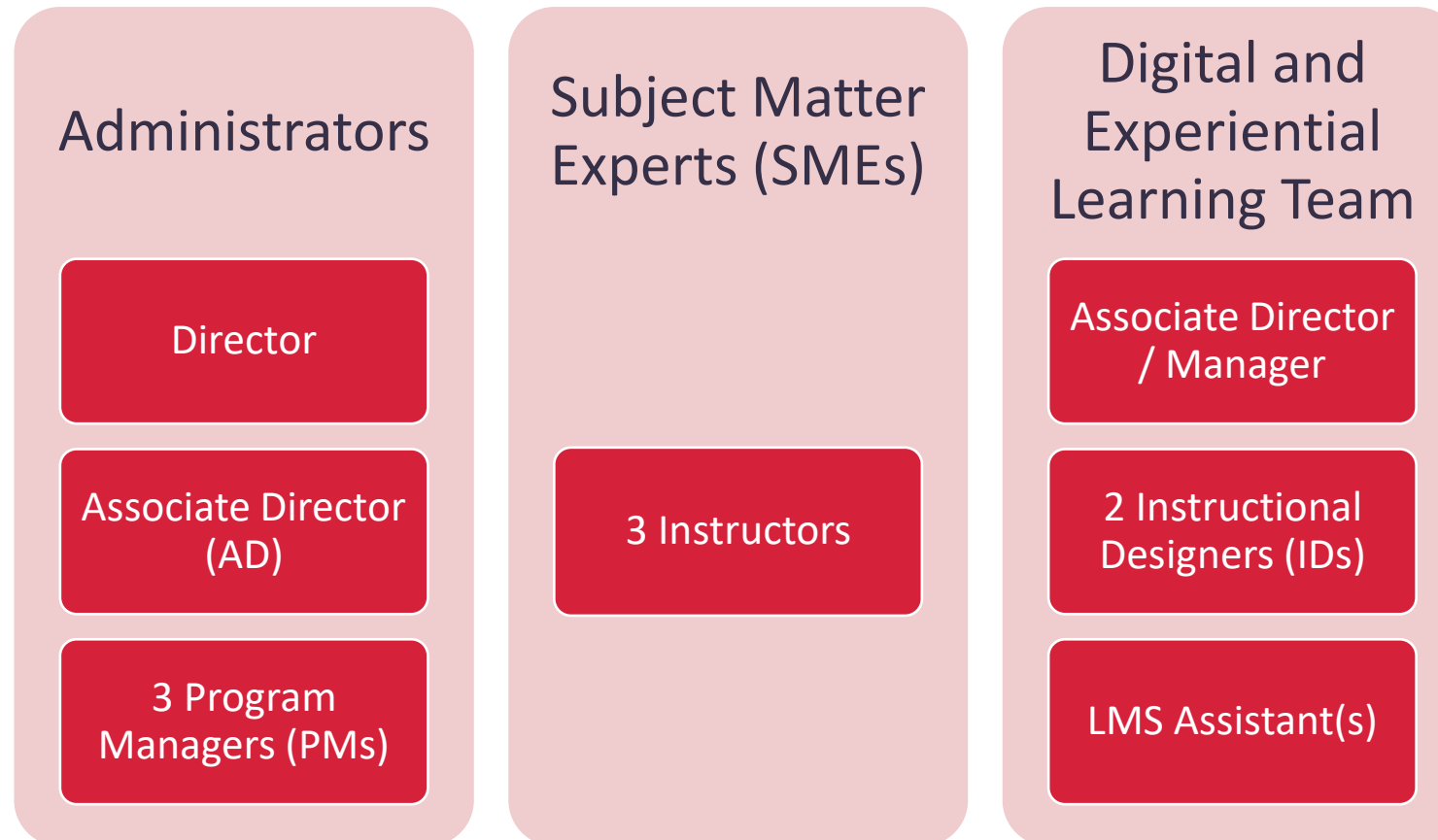# Introduction

Purpose of this Session

- Management perspective & stakeholders feedback

- Practical tips

Why a Curriculum Refresh?

- Changing educational English language pathway landscape (COVID/post-COVID, alternative options for language instruction and testing, internationalization, policy changes)

- Need to simplify offerings

- Need for standardization, modernization, and digital integration

Stakeholder Engagement

Pathways Refresh Project Team

Administrators

Director

Associate Director (AD)

3 Program Managers (PMs)

Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

3 Instructors

Digital and Experiential Learning Team

Associate Director / Manager

2 Instructional Designers (IDs)

LMS Assistant(s)

Other Stakeholders Involved

- Program Team (other instructors, administrative staff)

- Recruitment Team

- Student Services Team

- IT

- York U central departments

Stakeholder Engagement

- Instructor involvement: temporarily 'downloaded' from teaching to work on curriculum development

- Defined scope of work: structured input to clarify expectations, balance workload & ensure standardization

- Digital and Experiential Learning Team: partnered with instructional designers & LMS experts for innovation and accessibility compliance

Key Stages & Project Management Approach

Planning: Creation of Pathways Framework

- Market research, environmental scans, consultations

- Established a vision & set objectives

- Course mapping (identification of program components)

- Development of program & level outcomes

- Development of assessment strategy

- Development of scope of work ('download' of instructors)

Curriculum Development

- 'Downloads': Instructors' curriculum development

- Refinement of assessment strategy

- Development of LMS prototype (Moodle)

- Development of curriculum materials (class resources, assessments, rubrics, course outlines)

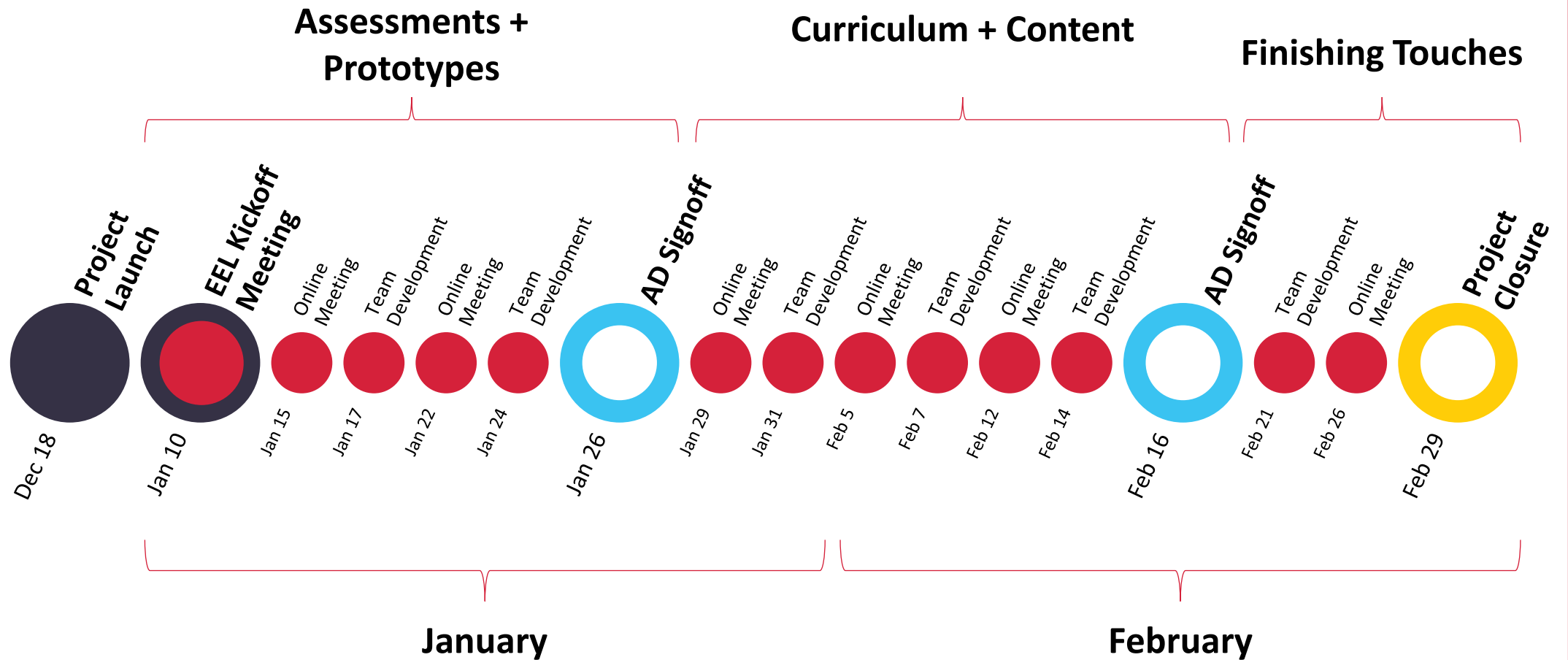- Development of instructors how-to-guides & videos

Implementation

- Onboarding of instructors and other stakeholders (recruitment, program staff, student services)

- Prep time for instructors

- Program launch

- Feedback collection and program review

Timeline

- Pathways Refresh: 1-year-long-process (Fall 2023 to Summer 2024 for Fall 2024 Launch)

- Duration of 'downloads': 8 weeks (Winter 2024)

Timeline

Assessments + Prototypes

Curriculum + Content

Finishing Touches

Project Launch — Dec 18

EEL Kickoff Meeting — Jan 10

Online Meeting — Jan 15

Team Development — Jan 17

Online Meeting — Jan 22

Team Development — Jan 24

AD Signoff — Jan 26

Online Meeting — Jan 29

Team Development — Jan 31

Online Meeting — Feb 5

Team Development — Feb 7

Online Meeting — Feb 12

Team Development — Feb 14

AD Signoff — Feb 16

Team Development — Feb 21

Online Meeting — Feb 26

Project Closure — Feb 29

January

February

16

Meetings & Development Sessions

- **2 Kick-off meetings** (pre-download and at the start of the download)

- **Monday online session (led by SMEs):** provide updates, review status and progress to make sure the deliverables are on track. IDs and Instructors present drafts and prototypes for feedback and initial approval from PMs to validate deliverables.

- **Wednesday in-person team development session (led by IDs):** collaborate with Instructors to develop assessments, curriculum documentation, and prototypes. IDs and SMEs concentrate on brainstorming and working on deliverables and then share those with PMs in the following Monday online meetings for extra input.

- **IDs** available for **1:1 sessions** with each instructor for more personalized and focused feedback.

- **Week 3, 6, and 8 Sign-off points:** SMEs provide brief overview on curriculum decisions, progress, next steps or questions for Associate Director.

Project Management Approach

- We utilized **project management tools** such as Asana to **organize and monitor the project.**

- We set up **regular check-in points.**

- We provided **templates** to ensure **standardization & accessibility.**

- Administrations, Instructors, and Digital and Experiential Learning Team **collaborated closely:** this collaboration was crucial in integrating innovative digital tools and experiential learning methodologies into the curriculum, aligning it with educational standards and student needs.

Challenges & Resistance Management

Challenges

- Resistance from staff due to established working habits/practices

- Tendency to work in isolation

- Lack of consistency & resistance to standardization

- Training gaps (e.g. use of shared documents, project management tools)

- Requests for deadline extensions within tight timeline

Resistance Management (1)

- Clear communication

- Define responsibilities

- Early involvement

- Empower instructors to share ideas & repurpose/update existing content in addition to finding new resources

- Be flexible while ensuring key milestones are timely met

Resistance Management 2)

"I felt defining an initial overarching vision, with some level of detail and reasoning was essential to move the project through in time for the required launch. Although resistance happened, the strength of the vision provided a baseline for discussions on where minor adaptations could be made. This helped also structure the projects involved and deadlines."

*Feedback from an **administrator** involved in the project*

Successes
& Lessons Learnt

Successes (1)

- Strong interdisciplinary teamwork and collaboration

- Structured and ongoing communication

- Standardization of instructional materials

- Establishment of clear guidelines

- Structured approach ensured smooth implementation

Successes (2)

"I think what really worked well was team collaboration and transparency. Although I was not involved in the first phase of the project, the takeover from [instructor name] went seamlessly. I was able to see the work the team had already put in and plan my contributions accordingly and this helped me overcome many of the challenges of joining late into the project.

"I think the fact that we worked together as a team went extremely well. It was interesting to see the "bigger picture" of how different departments at the school function and collaborate. [...] The team worked very cohesively on every part of the project. There was mutual understanding, and if there was any difference of opinions, everyone worked very hard to offer an effective solution."

*Feedback from **instructors** involved in the project*

Lessons Learnt & Areas for Improvement (1)

- Importance of early IT, Admissions, and Marketing involvement

- Communication & Role Clarity
    - Reiterate roles as needed

- Manage Change and Instructor Support
    - More structured onboarding for instructors during curriculum transition

- Ongoing Curriculum Development
    - Continuous refinement is necessary

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Lessons Learnt & Areas for Improvement (2)

"One of the biggest takeaways from this project was that a large-scale curriculum refresh can be highly effective when approached with a structured, scaffolded process. The step-by-step approach ensured that each phase was manageable and that collaboration among subject matter experts, program managers, instructional designers, and IT was purposeful and efficient. Breaking the work into smaller, focused groups allowed for targeted discussions while still keeping the overall program objectives in view."

*Feedback from an **instructor** involved in the project*

Lessons Learnt & Areas for Improvement (3)

"[W]hile the curriculum changes were well-designed, more structured support for instructors during the program launch would have eased the transition. The simultaneous introduction of a new program structure, curriculum updates, and the elimination of textbooks required significant adaptation, and a mentoring system or additional change management support during the first session could have helped faculty adjust more smoothly."

*Feedback from an **instructor** involved in the project*

What Stakeholders Liked the Most (1)

- Collaboration & Cross-departmental Engagement

- Seeing the Vision Come to Life

- Excitement about the program's flexibility and long-term impact

- Innovative pedagogical approaches that enhance student experience

What Stakeholders Liked the Most (2)

"I truly appreciate how the ELI continually evolves and adapts to meet the changing needs of students, ensuring that our programs remain relevant, engaging, and effective. This commitment to growth and innovation makes me proud to be a part of the ELI community. I am incredibly grateful to have contributed to the Pathways Refresh Project, as it was a valuable experience filled with collaboration, creativity, and meaningful progress. The project's positive impact on both instructors and students reinforces the importance of continuously refining our curriculum. I look forward to continuing to support the evolution of the ELI, both in formal projects and through my role as an instructor. If similar projects arise in the future, I would love to be involved again. Thank you for this opportunity!"

Feedback from an **instructor** involved in the project

What Stakeholders Liked the Most (3)

"I really enjoyed seeing the end product of the collaborative input of the Subject Matter Experts, Instructional Designers, and Program Managers. [...] [W]e know that there were some challenges in the development process however I was really inspired by how the teams eventually came together and completed the modules."

Feedback from an **instructional designer** involved in the project

What Stakeholders Liked the Most (4)

"I learned a lot about how to work collaboratively with a team of instructional designers that are not necessarily English language subject matter experts. Notably, this can bring some challenges, but it also brings fresh thinking and pedagogical approaches to our relatively niche world of English language teaching and learning. Working as part of larger project team was certainly a great experience."

Feedback from an **administrator** involved in the project

What Stakeholders Liked the Most (5)

"Building the vision, project and seeing it move to its outcome and successful launch! It future proofs the unit in how flexible it is."

Feedback from an **administrator** involved in the project

Practical Tips for Other Institutions

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Practical Tips for Other Institutions

- Clearly define roles and responsibilities

- Use project management tools (e.g. Asana)

- Involve stakeholders early

- Establish a strong onboarding system

- Establish a feedback system

- Prioritize change management and communication

- Structured review process for long-term success

- Establish trust

Questions?

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