



Comparative Analysis: OLA Online Seminar Evolution from 2024 to 2025

Annual Analysis of OLA Seminar Feedback (2024 vs. 2025)			
Category	2024 Emerging Issues & Survey Data	2025 Emerging Issues & Survey Data	Analysis & Trend
Philosophical Alignment	Strong Ideological Buy-in: Very high agreement (avg. ~5.0-5.5/6) with democratic principles, community rights, and professional responsibility to empower the marginalized.	Even Stronger Consensus: Near-unanimous agreement on core tenets. The 2025 cohort is a "true believer" cohort, showing deep internalization of OLA's philosophy.	✓ Success. The seminar is exceptionally effective at transmitting its core values. Participants leave strongly aligned with OLA's mission, viewing landscape as a democratic, communal right.
The Capability Gap	Awareness vs. Capability: High agreement with principles, but moderate confidence (avg. ~4.0-4.5/6) in personal ability to execute tasks (guiding processes, prototyping, evaluation).	Shift to an "Application Gap": High confidence in principles and awareness. Now a more advanced gap: high confidence in "soft skills" (empathy, listening) but moderate confidence in applied, technical skills (prototyping, evaluation). The cohort has the "what" and "why" and now demands the "how."	Evolving Challenge. The gap has matured. The 2024 issue was about foundational confidence; the 2025 issue is about applying a well-understood approach with sophisticated tools.
Pedagogical Focus (Theory vs. Practice)	Significant Theory-Practice Gap: Dominant feedback called for more practical workshops, hands-on sessions, and real-world case studies.	Persistent & Central Demand: 29% of recommendations asked for more real-life case studies. Phase C (Collaborative Design) was by far the most valued (76%) for being "hands-on" and turning "theory into action." Phase D (Evaluation) was hardest as it was "abstract."	Critical Area for Improvement. The demand for practical application is the most consistent and powerful feedback across both years. Participants learn best by doing.
Collaborative Challenges	Major Pain Point: Widespread difficulties with group formation, cross-timezone communication, non-participating members, and frustration with the Miro platform.	Intensified & Top Issue: Became the single most frequent recommendation (37%). New, specific demand for organizers to "track inactive members," indicating severe frustration with free-riding. Despite 100% participation in groups, experience was "mixed."	Most Urgent Issue. Collaboration problems worsened year-over-year, directly contradicting OLA's core value of co-creation. This is a major threat to participant satisfaction and learning outcomes.
Structural & Engagement Clarity	Requests for Clarity: Feedback indicated some lectures felt rushed or vague. Requests for clearer structure, concise presentations, and better time management.	Articulated Demand for Structure: 27% called for a "clearer / better structure & organization." Online Engagement Fatigue confirmed, with the lowest ratings for online concentration. 24% requested more interactivity.	Growing Need. As the content becomes more complex, the need for a crystal-clear, well-paced, and engaging structure becomes more critical, especially online.
Geographical Diversity	Explicit Eurocentrism Critique: Participants pointed out heavy focus on Europe/N. America and demanded more diverse perspectives (Asia, Africa, S. America).	Less Prominent in 2025 Data: The 2025 summary doesn't highlight it as a top-tier issue, but it remains in participant quotes (e.g., "Discuss issues beyond the US").	Potentially Addressed or Superseded? It's unclear if this was improved or if other issues (collaboration, practice) became more urgent in participants' minds. Requires monitoring.
Long-Term Engagement & Community	Strong Desire for Continuity: Significant interest in monthly seminars, an alumni network, mentorship, and a platform for sharing. Interest in defined roles (tutor, mentor).	Powerful & Specific Demand: 44% motivated by "real-world project opportunities." 27% want defined roles (facilitator, researcher). 17% request a "community of practice" or alumni platform.	Major Opportunity. Participants are not passive students; they want to become active contributors and practitioners within the OLA ecosystem. This aligns perfectly with OLA's mission to "build capacity."

CONCLUSION

The comparison reveals that the OLA seminar is successfully cultivating a more confident and ambitious cohort of participants. The similarities highlight persistent, core operational and pedagogical challenges that need addressing, especially around collaboration and practical application.

The differences, however, are even more telling. They show a clear evolution in the participant profile from learners who are grasping the concepts to aspiring practitioners who are ready to use them. The feedback from 2025 is a call to action for OLA to move from a seminar series into a robust, project-based network that can harness the energy and skills of its alumni. The challenge for OLA is to solve the persistent logistical issues while building the infrastructure to support this growing demand for real-world impact and long-term community.

In essence, the journey from 2024 to 2025 shows a program that has successfully passed the "why" and is now being challenged by its participants to master the "how" – how to collaborate effectively online, how to apply theory in practice, and how to build a lasting community of action.

