Practical Tips for the Design, Delivery, and Evaluation of Your Next Workshop

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Objectives:
At the end of this discussion participants will be able to:
- Identify common problems which decrease the effectiveness of workshops
- Identify strategies to address these problems during the planning and delivery phase of the workshop
- Identify elements of workshop design, delivery, and evaluation which emphasize adult learning principles.

Content for today’s session has been adapted from:

What makes for high impact, highly effective workshop?
- Little empirical evidence
- Today’s talk draws upon principles of adult learning
- Careful planning for both the design and delivery phase is key

6 Reasons Why Workshops Fall Flat…
- Inadequate understanding of audience
- Mismatch between objectives & instructional methods
- Not really a workshop
- Rushed ending
- Poor room set up
- Presenter behaviors

12 Tips for increasing effectiveness:
- Choose topic, goals, objectives carefully
- Know your audience
- Match instructional strategies to content, objectives, time
- Determine who is in the audience
- Review objectives and activities
- Establish relevance and learning climate
- Facilitate active participation and engagement
- Provide relevant and practical information
- Remember principles of adult learning
- Vary activities, style and pace
- Summarize and consolidate learning, request feedback
- The small things matter

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Tip 1 Choose the topic, goals, and objectives carefully
- This is where things can first go awry
- Influences: teaching method, sequence of learning activities, agenda and evaluation
- Success of workshop is measured against your objectives

In choosing the topic, goals, and objectives - questions to consider:
- What do you hope to achieve and why is this important?
- Where is the gap?
- Is a workshop the best way?
- Are objectives achievable? In time frame?

Tip 2 Know your audience
- Edge of uncertainty is important for transformation and transference
- Often operating with incomplete information
- Plan to verify what you think you know
- Have a contingency plan
  - e.g. have materials for more and less experienced members of the audience

Tip 3 Match instructional strategies to content, objectives, and time
- Every strategy should serve a learning objective
- Choose based on:
  - goals, objectives, time, perceived needs/preferences
- When choosing consider opportunities for:
  - Experiential learning, reflection, feedback, immediate application
- Vary strategies if possible
  - Accommodate different learning styles
  - Allows for reinforcement without the appearance of redundancy
  - Consider taking a risk

Common interactive instructional strategies
- Interactive presentations – ARS
- Buzz groups
- Think – Pair – Share
- Concentric circles
- Brainstorming
- Case vignettes
- Individual/group exercises
- Role play
- Video – trigger
- Demonstrations, debates
- World Cafe

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Plan for the unexpected
- More attendees than anticipated
- Fewer than anticipated
- Different learner needs
- Room set up

Determine agenda and time
- Add 20 – 25% for each activity
- Flexibility is key
- Remember to account for: introduction, summarization and consolidation, and evaluation
- More process based activities need more time
  - e.g. consensus building, problem solving toward solutions
- Bottom line: Less is More

The Delivery Phase

Tip 4 Introductions
Determine who is in audience
- Helps establish rapport, set learning climate
- Confirms who you thought is there and why
- Helps ensure relevance
- Helps you adapt your comments, examples to needs of participants
- Helps increase attention and engagement

Introductions
- Individual only if < 12 and > 2
- Strategies:
  - Show of hands
  - Selected audience response from representative subgroups
  - Standing to sitting – see who is left
  - The question asked is key to the purpose
  - Balance benefit with time

Tip 5 Outline Objectives, Activities
- Review what you hope to accomplish
- Review what you will and will not be doing
- What should they be doing?
- Consider sharing or obtaining a needs assessment, preferences before beginning
- Consider feedback on proposed agenda
Tip 6 Establish relevance, learning climate
- Prior steps are key to this
- Grab attention – highlight need
  - E.g. “What % of Americans do you think have proficient health literacy skills? Function at the 10th grade level? 5th grade level?”
- Review ground rules if needed
- Acknowledge risk

Tip 7 Facilitate active participation, engagement
- Invite questions, group discussion, debate
- Encourage learning from each other
- As questions arise or problems are presented – consider group problem solving
- For skill acquisition – need opportunity for practice and feedback

Tip 8 Provide relevant and practical background information
- Participants want to leave knowing they learned something
- Need a context for learning or framework for activities
- Summarize key message, provide concrete information, ensure common base for discussion
- Mini-lecture should be brief

Tip 9 Remember principles of adult learning
- Participants arrive:
  - with a variety of motivations, expectations, experiences, resistance to change
  - as co-learners looking for re-learning
- Hearing others ideas is important, as is time for practice and feedback
- Opportunity for contemplation, reflection is key

Strategies for prompting reflection
- Use everything to teach
  - Spontaneous example of phenomenon that you are trying to teach
  - Point out parallels
- Build in opportunities for contemplation and self assessment as you go
  - “While I review strategies for ……think about what areas prove…for you.”

Tip 10 Vary activities, style, pace
- Goal: keep things moving while being attentive to needs of the group
- Consider a change Q 15 – 20
- If energy is flagging:
  - Change pace, activity, group arrangement, position in the room
  - Trick of two flip charts
  - Take a break
  - Get feedback
- Flexibility is key – much is unpredictable
Tip 11 Summarize, Consolidate Learning, Request Feedback

- Avoid the rushed ending
- Often multiple threads need to be pulled together
- If not done:
  - Valuable events and learning can quickly fade
  - Participants may leave without a clear sense of what was accomplished

- Refer to original or renegotiated objectives, or pressing concerns
- Synthesize main points
- Provide time for individual/group reflection
- Several benefits to sharing collective gains
- Consider CTC – action plan
  - Capture in writing intention, specific and measurable

Tip 12 The Small Things Matter

- Sharing your enthusiasm for the topic
- Greetings
- Repeat questions so all can hear
- Direct answers to the group
- Attend to all portions of the room

- Provide equal air time
- Be clear about ground rules and follow them
- Monitor process, flow, time
- Consider room arrangement
- Leave enough time for closure

Questions?????

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Take home message...

- When planning a workshop remember the areas which tend to cause problems:
  - Inadequate understanding of audience
  - Mismatch between objectives & instructional methods
  - Not really a workshop
  - Rushed ending
  - Poor room set up
  - Presenter behaviors
Evaluation of your workshop

- When designing the evaluation consider the following:
  - What is the goal? Program planning in future? Feedback on your delivery? Or design choices?
- Survey should include:
  - Assessment of utility, relevance, content, teaching and learning methods, and intent to change
  - Quantitative and qualitative assessment of learning and behavior
  - Another way of saying this is include:
    - Reaction: participants views on the experience
    - Learning: changes in attitudes, knowledge, skills
    - Behavior: changes in participants behaviors
    - Results: changes in the organizational system, the patient, or the learner

When planning your next workshop...

- What will you do differently?

References