

EER 2023 Workshop Planning: What we've learned from 2022 workshop evaluations

On workshop description and goals:

- Do-able goals are preferable over aspirational!
- Participants value products or plans they can implement in their setting – make action-planning a goal and build in time and structure to support action-planning.
- Make your workshop accessible and useful for a spectrum of starting points and prior knowledge and experience.
- Consider the expertise and interests of likely participants, while making your workshop open and useful to a variety of participants. If you have a target audience, include that information in your description.
- If prior knowledge is useful for your workshop, advertise it as recommended, with resources participants can use to get up to speed if possible.

Planning activities to support your goals:

- Use active learning strategies and pedagogical practices appropriate for adult learners.
- Utilize a mix of presentation/explanation and more interactive elements.
- Most common constructive feedback: less lecture/talking and more hands-on, interactive work; more show and share and less tell.
 - Typical and representative constructive feedback from one of last year's workshop participants: "My key suggestion would be to incorporate more peer discussion and a deliverable like an action plan, going beyond just guiding participants step by step through how to use X. Your question at the end were really good -- what case studies would you use this for? -- but the question was just left hanging, unfortunately. I was really interested in learning from my peers and also sharing my idea to get feedback."
- Specific strategies to consider using:
 - Hands-on, interactive engagement and peer discussion- consider polling, think-pair-share, gallery tour, jigsaw activities
 - Opportunities for reflection (consider minute papers, goal-setting etc.)
 - Backwards design - clearly state your workshop goals and plan activities around them.
 - Just in time teaching/ responsive teaching - use polls, participant feedback to adjust focus and activities (plan some flexibility if possible)
 - Small group discussion/work and share outs
 - Build in time for participants to reflect, ask questions, and discuss with peers.
 - Don't skimp on breaks!
 - Build in opportunities to "do" then "get feedback" and "give feedback"
- Please also consider:
 - "Practicing what you preach" – e.g., don't just explain, but DEMONSTRATE active learning strategies when running a workshop on active learning.
 - Participants value concrete examples and examples of putting theories/ideas into practice (such as specific teaching activities, mentoring programs, etc.), even if they are specific to a context or course that isn't shared among all participants. If provided the time/opportunity to adapt to their own context, even better!

Tips on co-facilitating effectively:

- Plan roles of co-facilitators so that everyone knows what they are doing; avoid distracting participants from the active facilitator.
- Consider how to transition between facilitators and activities smoothly and in a timely manner (use a single computer for presentations, etc.)

Other aspects to consider:

- Utilize mechanisms/technology for facilitating small group, participant communication and creation of artifacts - the SERC website for your workshop, google docs, etc. Often participants will utilize these resources later on, and folks who could not participate will use them too; it's a good way to expand the impact of your work!
- If a goal for your workshop is to develop/maintain a community, consider mechanisms and plans for moving forward and continuing work, as well as how much time/energy you want to and are able to devote to the effort.
- Please plan ahead for and bring all materials and support/setup you need to for your workshop. As much as we want to help, SERC and NAGT staff and EER planners generally do not have extra materials and/or personnel to support your sessions beyond what is offered to all. We will try to help if possible.
- Be cognizant of unintentional exclusive or loaded language - avoid terms that may be racist, ableist, or otherwise exclusive. For example, "turntable" instead of "lazy Susan" which has slave origins, "Gallery tour" rather than "gallery walk" that may be perceived as exclusive or ableist.
- Consider the pacing of work and goals, i.e., avoid focusing on only one goal for most of workshop, then moving rapidly through others. Make sure the timing is balanced between goals.

For multi-session, morning workshops:

- Survey participants prior to your workshop, with enough lead time for you to adjust plans to your participants' interests and goals.
- Consider assigning participants a short homework assignment
- Prepare a detailed plan, but also plan points of flexibility/change based on participant feedback
- Be prepared to adjust focus/activities from one day to the next based on road-check answers (and consider how you might elicit useful feedback in the road checks to guide your planning)
- Plan time between workshop sessions to read road check feedback, reflect on what you perceive as going well and how you might do things differently, meet with co-facilitators, and review/revise plans for next session(s)

An example workshop structure with significant positive feedback from last year:

https://serc.carleton.edu/earth_rendezvous/2022/program/morning_workshops/w7/program.html