

How to Deliver Great Workshop Presentations!

You have an hour or 75 minutes to share your wisdom with a group of people. You dig out your powerpoint and edit your notes to make sure you have everything they need to know in one place. But wait! There are a few points to remember before you walk into the workshop:

1. Teaching isn't about you, it is about them. Traditional teaching places all of the emphasis on the teacher and the vast body of knowledge that he or she brings to the presentation. Time to flip the focus.

- Know your audience, and take time to connect with them.
- Ask a few targeted questions to learn more about what they know about the subject area.

2. Adult learners are driven by WIIFM, "What's In It For Me." Another way to think about this is why should I care, or how is this relevant to me and my work. Make connections that show that you know who they are and what challenges they are facing.

- Building off of 1, tie it back to specific information. "Mary, for example, is leading a childcare program. This information is important because she may see funding cut if she doesn't act on this."
- Review your presentation and remove extraneous information. This would include anything that is really wonkish, or clichés that don't mean much.

3. Information sticks better if you do the work of organizing it. Adults can only remember 4-7 things at a time. Delivering a large body of information without placing it into a hierarchy will result in little of it remembered and therefore acted on. Think about a good symphony piece: it blends times of high energy and quiet moments, each needed to bring appreciation for the other.

- Ask yourself this: What 4-5 things do they have to know to understand this topic? Then take each topic and expand on that. This will create a hierarchy that will help the learner prioritize information.
- Think about the tempo of your presentation. When will it go fast? Slow? Medium speed?
- Think about your balance between words and pictures. All-word presentations are hard to watch.

4. Storytelling has been around since the beginning of time because stories deliver information in a way that works. In workshop settings, often these stories come in the form of case studies.

- Think about some archetypal cases that demonstrate your point. Use the story of that case to deliver your key messages.
- Invite learners to share their story (in brief) so that you can weave their information into their story.

5. Build empathy with your audience. Adults bring a lot of emotion into their learning. There are several recent studies that tell us that tapping into these emotions is critical to effective education.

- Imagine the emotion—or emotions in a larger group—that people feel on the topic that you are talking about. Call it out, honor it, talk about it. If you don't know, ask them.
- Think about ways to bridge their actual emotion with the ideal emotion. For example, people feel powerlessness around discussion related to government or legal rules. What knowledge or skill can you share with them that will make them feel more power, more confident, and more connected?

6. While learning is great, action is better. Many presentations are shaped around learning objectives. "By the end of the presentation, you will know X." That is great, but it doesn't necessarily help people to take the actions you need them to take towards better practice.

- Ask yourself: what actions would you need to take to do what you are telling them to do? Give them whatever tools, resources, etc. you would use to get there. For example, if we are saying that nonprofits should engage in more financial oversight, we need to give them tools and prescribed actions to help them do it.