

# Learn To Teach Powerful Experiential Workshops

## Lesson 4: Part 1

### Planning Your Workshop Timing

**Goal:** Plan the amount of time you'll need for each component of your workshop, including breaks.

#### Workshop Components:

- Introduction (you and workshop)
- Safety and support
- (Centering)
- Introduction to workshop
- Buy-in
- Warm-up
- Core ideas
- Action learning
- Integration
- Closing

The secret to a powerful workshop is to have the ACTION LEARNING component be the centerpiece!

See below for a chart with suggested timing of each component.

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## Suggested Timing For Workshop Components

Workshop Component	1 hour workshop	2 hour workshop	3 hour workshop
Introduction	2	2	2
Safety and Support	3	3	3
Centering	3-5	3-5	3-5
Intro to Workshop	5	7	10
Buy-in	5	7	12
Warm-up	5	7	15
Short Break	None	As Needed	As Needed
Core Ideas	7-10	10-15	up to 20
Bathroom Break	As Needed	As Needed	As Needed
Action Learning	10	10-15	15-20
Integration	7-10	7-10	10-15
Short Break	None	Yes	Yes
Add another round of Core Ideas, Action Learning, and Integration Components	None	None	Time for one more round
Closing	5-7	10	10

### About the Longer Intro, Buy-in, and Warm-up Option

1. In a 2-3 hour or longer workshop, you can build a bit more of an introduction of the core ideas into these sections, as well as allow people more time to explore their own reasons for being there and bonding among group members.
2. If there's time, Buy-in should include everyone getting a chance to speak, even if they just say their name and where they're from. A quick way to have everyone talk is to ask people to turn to the person next to them and introduce themselves and say why they're at the workshop or what they hope to get out of it.

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3. Short on time for a buy-in? Ask questions that you have people raise their hand on, such as, “Who’s dealing with \_\_\_\_\_?” (The blank is some problem you’re going to address in the workshop.) Or, “Who’s had experience with \_\_\_\_\_?” (workshop topic) In these ways you’re finding out who’s in the room and what they know and want.
4. Avoid taking “forever” to get to the meat of the material, which should begin at the Warm-up section. DO NOT take up 1/3 or 1/2 the workshop on people introducing themselves or getting to know each other.

### Core Ideas Tips

1. Don’t exceed 20 minutes. People’s attention spans are just not that long.
2. Be clear and concise.
3. Practice what you’re going to say and time yourself!
4. Every item in Core Ideas must relate to a Learning Objective.

### Action Learning Tips

1. Avoid an activity that takes a long time to set up. Think through and prepare instructions for getting people into and out of activities with as little wasted time as possible. This also keeps the group energy focused.
2. Check participants’ break needs and allow them to do a “quick bathroom break” so they can concentrate on the activity and you don’t lose people who will go to the bathroom now anyway.

### Integration Tips

1. The quickest integration is popcorn sharing in the whole group. If participants are scattered around the room, in pairs or small groups, assess whether they need to move back to the group seating, or if the energy will be cohesive if they just turn to face you. Feel free to lead the popcorn sharing from anywhere in the room, and to move around, intermingling with participant groups as you elicit feedback and answer questions.
2. Second fastest way to do integration is either journaling or sharing in pairs. Typically this would be followed up with full group popcorn sharing of insights and Q&A.
3. Group popcorn sharing and Q&A is very valuable to:

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1. Answer any lingering questions, so participants feel clear and empowered when they go home
2. Re-emphasize major points by connecting core ideas to what people are sharing
3. Reassembles the group energy in preparation for workshop closure

### **Adding Another Round Of Core Ideas, Action Learning, and Integration Components**

In a longer workshop, or with complex core ideas, divide the material into smaller chunks with each having its own segment for presentation of ideas followed by action learning and integration.

### **About Breaks**

1. Breaks have to be managed and directed or getting people back from a break is like herding cats. Be specific about when breaks will be, how long, and why you'll be making sure people are back on time. ("Because we have so much great material we have to get to!") Get Buy-in for respecting group time and set promptness as a group value.
2. Tell the group the break is shorter than you've planned it to be in your notes. If you want a 10 minute break, tell them they have a quick 5 minutes to use the bathroom, if you want a 15 minute break, tell them ten minutes.
3. Use something, like a chime or bell, to call people back from a break and get the room quiet again. Show them this during Safety and Support and explain how Breaks will work.
4. If you're doing a short workshop or one where you think people might need to use the bathroom more than usual (elderly or pregnant women, as examples) then tell people they can use the rest room at their own discretion and to slip in and out as quietly as possible.

### **About Q & A**

1. Decide if you want people to interrupt with questions when they have them or hold them until a certain point. Be sure to tell people how questions will be handled during the Safety and Support section of your workshop.
2. Guide Q&A by asking particular types of questions, such as, "Does anyone have any clarification questions?" or "What did you learn about yourself in that exercise, did anything surprise you?"

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3. Avoid allowing or encouraging the use of Q&A or feedback time for participants to say whether they liked or didn't like a particular exercise. Kindly and respectfully steer them away from stating their preference to a more meaty and relevant questions, such as, "What new ideas did this exercise give you that you could try in the future?" or the question in #2, above.
4. If someone does say they didn't like it, acknowledge that with a reflection, "So, you didn't like it." And then immediately redirect them by either restating the question you asked or probing deeper about their experience. Never get into a discussion about liking or disliking, especially disliking.
5. Liking or disliking is not the point of any exercise. The point is, What did you learn about \_\_\_\_\_ or about yourself? What's new? What are your takeaways? What's the new opportunity you see now?
6. Most empowering question? How are you going to take this information home? What are you going to do differently? This is how a growth mindset works and what makes a workshop powerful.

### Closure Tips

1. If participants are in small groups for integration, consider whether to leave them their for closure or bring them either back into their original seats. Having people stand for a brief action closure is also an option.
2. Closure time is used to thank everyone, and help them feel centered and grounded enough to go home.
3. Stay after until every question is answered and everyone has gone.
4. Remind people about your next workshop or working with you privately.

#### **TO DO:**

Try listing your workshop components and estimate the number of minutes you'll need for each section.

Practice parts of your workshop to see how long things actually take.

Reassess your original predictions and make changes as necessary.