

Workshop Preparation and Presentation: A Valuable Form of Scholarship for the Clinician-Educator

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The Challenge

Busy clinician-educators are charged with developing a national reputation to advance their careers and achieve academic promotion. Fortunately, scholarly work now includes not only peer-reviewed publications but also the development of curriculum materials, assessment tools, and presentation of educational workshops at regional or national meetings.¹⁻³ Although most individuals involved in residency education attend workshops at meetings, only a minority take on the challenge of leading them. This Rip Out is an instructional guide on how to prepare and present a successful workshop.

What Is Known

Workshop presentation affords clinician-educators the opportunity to share clinical, educational, scientific, and faculty development expertise with a wide audience. Workshops support the development of a professional academic reputation, support academic promotion, provide an opportunity to showcase and hone teaching skills, serve as a springboard for additional scholarly work, and foster collaboration and networking with colleagues both within and between institutions.

A Guide to Developing and Presenting Workshops From Start to Finish

Step 1: Choosing a Topic Almost any clinical, educational, research, or faculty development topic can be adapted to a

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Rip Out action items

1. Pursue workshops as a form of scholarly work
2. Identify opportunities for workshop presentation at the meetings you attend regularly
3. Apply the 4-step approach to developing and presenting a workshop
 - A. Choose a topic
 - B. Write a workshop summary and learning objectives
 - C. Plan and develop the workshop content
 - D. Present an effective workshop

workshop format. Topics that have the greatest potential for success are ones that:

- you feel passionate about (but are not necessarily expert in);
- are timely and/or potentially controversial;
- align with your meeting's theme and objectives;
- provide the opportunity for skills-based or "hands-on" practice or learning.

Step 2: Writing a Workshop Summary and Learning Objectives

The workshop summary or abstract and its accompanying learning objectives serve as a framework for subsequent workshop development. The summary is essential for "selling" the workshop to the reviewers and for attracting attendees.

Learning objectives for the workshop should follow the SMART format.⁴

- Specific (state what the learner will be able to do)
- Measurable (can be observed at the end of the training session)
- Attainable (within scheduled time/specified conditions)
- Relevant (to the needs of the participant and the organization)
- Timely (achievable by the end of the workshop)

The summary should answer 3 key questions:

1. Why is the topic important to the prospective audience?
2. What should participants expect to happen during the session (ie, how will the learning objectives be achieved)?
3. What will participants take away from the workshop, both in the form of knowledge or skills and in the form of tangibles, such as resource material or handouts?

The interactive portions of the workshop should be stressed and should include both small- and large-group discussions and activities wherever possible.

Step 3: Planning and Developing Workshop Content The “work” of developing a workshop begins after the proposal has been accepted. Assignments are typically delegated to each of the collaborators by interest, expertise, and working style. For the workshop leader, it is important to establish expectations and deadlines early on. Frequent meetings in person or by conference call may be necessary.

Usually, at least half of the workshop should be interactive and facilitated by a workshop faculty member. Common interactive methods include a case-based, problem-based, or team-based learning format; skills stations; or question-answer sessions. These activities generally occur in small groups. Groups can be assigned randomly or by individual interests or learning goals. Alternatively, small-group learning can be uniform among all groups. It is often useful for a synopsis of the work done in each small group to be shared in a large-group format, with someone from each group serving as a spokesperson. The remaining time is typically spent on didactics delivered by the workshop faculty, and can be delivered in the form of a slide presentation or a handout, or both. This can be done at the beginning or end of the workshop or interspersed between small-group activities.

A few minutes at the end of the workshop should be reserved for collecting workshop evaluations, which serve as useful feedback for professional improvement and provide valuable teaching evaluations needed for one’s local promotion process.

Step 4: Presenting a “Crinkle-Free” Workshop Tips:

- Be aware of the equipment provided for use at the meeting venue, and be prepared to bring your own if it is not adequate.
- Arrive early to the assigned room to ensure that the room and equipment are properly set up; table arrangement should optimize the small-group interactive components.
- At the start of the workshop, get to know the audience. Assess their range of prior knowledge or experience with the topic and glean their goals for attending the workshop.
- During the workshop, adhere to the timeline set in advance. Designate a timekeeper among your collaborators to keep the group on schedule.
- Use effective public speaking, visuals, and small-group facilitation strategies; practice ahead of time.

- Station a collaborator at the door at the end of the workshop to collect evaluations and provide exiting attendees with take-home materials.

How You Can Start TODAY

- Check your professional association’s website and international graduate medical education forums for upcoming meetings and workshop submission guidelines and deadlines.
- Brainstorm with your colleagues, your mentor, or your division chief about potential workshop topics. Did you recently present a summary of evidence on a clinical topic to the residents? Are you actively involved in teaching a certain aspect of the residency curriculum? Those are perfect topics to choose.
- Identify potential collaborators from your own and other institutions. Consider those with similar interests or working styles to yours or those with whom you have enjoyed collaborating on other projects.

What You Can Do LONG TERM

- Compose a workshop summary and accompanying learning objectives. Remember to answer the 3 key questions in your proposal and write the learning objectives in the SMART format.
- Confirm 2 to 4 collaborators to commit to helping you with the development and the presentation if your workshop is accepted.
- When it is accepted, delegate the work of development to collaborators in definable pieces.
- Set up 2 or more meetings to discuss and eventually practice the workshop.
- When it is time to present your workshop, do so within the time frame allotted, using effective presentation and teaching methods.
- Include the workshop and its evaluations in your teaching portfolio.
- Consider converting the workshop into another scholarly work by presenting it locally, at a different meeting, and/or converting it into a review article or other publication.

Resources

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