**Mentorship Workshop Term One (Phase Two)**

**/20**

**Preamble**

Now that you have planned and implemented your first workshop, it is time to think about how you did, the process, and what needs revision before the next workshop. The sharper you can hone your workshop skills, the more benefit it will have for you and the grade 8s in tutorial that you are working with in Term One. This article provides a summary of what you have been doing in Mentorship in October, and gives you time to think about the last stage of a workshop: the reflection/evaluation/revision process.

**Assignment**

Read the article below and then answer the questions so that you have the opportunity to reflect on your challenges and successes. This will be collected at the start of class.

**Assessment**

You will be assessed on your thoughtfulness, depth of thought, and accuracy.

**This Is How You Plan & Run a Great Workshop**

**Guerric de Ternay (2019)**

**What a Workshop Really Is**

First, a workshop has to be interactive. It isn’t a lecture. Scott Berkun [explains](http://scottberkun.com/2013/run-a-good-workshop/) this well:

“A cooking workshop means [participants] cook things. A writing workshop means [participants] write things. If most of your “workshop” is people not actually making anything, you should perhaps call it a class, a lecture, or a mistake.” I see workshops as a way to get a group to collaborate efficiently or learn in an interactive way.

Organising a workshop gives you the opportunity to get everyone in the same room in order to:

1. Facilitate collaborative work (planning, ideating…);
2. Teach new skills to the team;
3. Tap into the tacit knowledge of each team member
4. Update the team to get everyone aligned on the current state of the project (this should be a secondary goal, as it’s not the most efficient way to update a group);
5. Get the participants to make a decision (be very careful of decisions by consensus).

**How to *Prepare* a Great Workshop**

There are five key phases in preparing a great workshop:

1. Analysing
2. Planning
3. Developing
4. Rehearsing
5. Evaluating

The distinction among these phases will help you focus on answering the right questions at the right time, i.e. avoid putting the cart before the horse.

1. **Analysing**

Before preparing and running a workshop, you must be confident it’s the best way to get the outcome you need. When it’s not the case, a workshop becomes an entertainment or a time waster, i.e. a mistake.

You must be clear on the context of the workshop.

* Why do you need a workshop? What do you want to achieve?
* Do you really need a workshop for that?
* If yes, what is your vision of success (ideal outcome) for this workshop?
* What outputs do you want to have by the end of the session?

Analysing should lead you to a clear objective for the workshop.

Workshops are often scheduled weeks or months in advance. Preparing a workshop will force you to think ahead of your project plan.

1. **Planning**

Planning is about creating the structure of the workshop.

Start planning a workshop with the end in mind. Visualise the outcome and outputs you want. Then, work backwards so your plan really gets you there.

It’s better if you can create a detailed day plan for your workshop. This includes:

* Headlines for each moment of the workshop
* The detail of each activity: what you will tell the participants and ask them to do
* A time box for each activity
* Who does what
* What materials you’ll need for the session

At each moment of the day, you should be able to picture exactly what you do with your audience. The more people in the room the clearer you have to be.

This is also the moment to ask yourself who should attend the session. You should also identify what state you want the group to be in, e.g. energise the team; focus on an intense planning session…In my experience, if you’re clear on the context and what you want to get out of the workshop, planning becomes easier.

1. **Developing**

The Developing phase is about creating the content you will need (or sometimes, finding it, if you already have a log of content and exercises).

If you think you’re going to reuse the content, I encourage you to write scripts. This will allow you to remember what happened and have other team members run similar workshops.

There’s a reason I make a distinction between *planning*and *developing*. Both activities require you to focus on different things:

– Planning is about creating the outline of the workshop.
– Developing is putting all the things in place to be ready to execute your plan.

It’s like *writing* and *editing*. They require two different mindsets. You need a clear focus on one or the other.

1. **Rehearsing**

If you feel nervous at the beginning of a workshop, the chances are that you didn’t spend enough time rehearsing with your team.

Rehearsing is a good way to gain confidence and sense-check if there are any issues in the plan. In the ideal situation, you’d like to run a pilot workshop. But it’s hard to find time for this (except if you run the same workshop several times with different groups).

Fortunately, you can get your team ready just by going through the plan ahead of the session. Make sure everyone is clear on what they have to do and say.

1. **Evaluating**

Evaluating how the workshop went will help you achieve two things:

1. On a project-level, you’ll get a clear understanding of the problems that need to be solved in order to ensure that the rest of the project is going to run smoothly;
2. On a personal level, it’s the best way to improve your ability to run workshops. It’s also the chance to improve your preparation process.

You can evaluate the workshop and the process with your team or by yourself. I encourage you to follow the [feedback analysis](https://guerric.co.uk/feedback-analysis/) method (comparing expectations with results) or the [clearing session](https://guerric.co.uk/clearing-session/) approach (spotting what worked and what didn’t work).

That’s it about the *preparation* process.

Now, let’s get into the arena. I’d like to share some practical tips that will help you *run* great workshops.

**15 Practical Tips to *Run* a Great Workshop**

1. **Start with the end in mind**

Share a clear vision of what you to want to achieve this workshop.

It will help onboard the participants and make sure that they understand what you will expect from them.

1. **Start communicating clarity on the why, the how, and the what**

At What If, we use a framework called *Purpose, Process, and Payoff*.

Since we want [purpose], we are going to do [process] in order to arrive at [payoff].-

* The *purpose* is the result. It’s the reason you want to do this workshop, i.e. where you want to be at the end of the workshop.
* The *process* is the way you’ll get there. It’s an explanation of who does what and when.
* The *payoff* is the output. It’s what people can expect to get at the end of the process.

Explaining these three elements to the participants will ensure that everyone is aligned with the agenda and the outcome of the workshop.

1. **Create a collaborative environment**

The environment–the space and the atmosphere–has a huge influence on us. In [The Checklist Manifesto](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1846683149?ie=UTF8&linkCode=xm2&camp=2025&creative=6738&tag=boostco-20&creativeASIN=1846683149&SubscriptionId=), Atul Gawande highlights an interesting concept called the “[activation phenomenon](https://hbr.org/2010/02/introductions-are-much-more-th)“:

“Giving [doctors and nurses] a chance to say something at the start [of an operation] seemed to activate their sense of participation and responsibility and their willingness to speak up.”

An easy way of doing this is to get everyone to introduce themselves in an engaging way.

Besides asking them about their name and their job, you can also ask them about: what excites them the most about the workshop or their best memory eating out or driving a car. These questions sound naive but they will encourage everyone to share a personal story and will make them more comfortable.

1. **Make it interactive**

There are moments in a workshop, where you need to explain concepts to the participants.

Make this part interactive too.

Ask them questions. Run an exercise to put the concept into practice and have them share back and debrief on what they did.

1. **Run exercises in a structured way**

All exercises follow the same framework as your session. They have a *purpose*, a *process*, and a *payoff*.

You brief the exercise by doing the following:

1. Remind the participants of the purpose;
2. Tell them exactly how it’s going to work: who does what, when, and for how long;
3. Be clear on timing;
4. Explain what output you expect to get once it’s done;
5. Ask if there are any questions.

Once the exercise is done, you may want to do two things (depending on your goals):

1. **Share back**. Have each person or group to share the result of the exercise with the rest of the participants. It can be a chance for them to build on it or ask questions.
2. **Debrief**. Depending on the context of your workshop, you may ask if there’s any additional comment, whether they found that fun/hard/frustrating, what are the key things they learnt, when they are going to use this process…

Then, you can repeat with the next exercise.

1. **If you want them to learn something…**

There are three things to keep in mind when you plan to teach something new.

1. **The starting point** — *What do the participants already know about it?*
2. **The learning objectives** — *What do they need to know about it?*
3. **The context of use** — *How will they use it in the future?*

The last question is *really* important.

Emphasising the situations in which what you’re teaching will be useful increases the likelihood that the participants will remember it and use it at the right time.

1. **Manage the team’s energy**

Make sure that people are in a positive/constructive state of mind.

At What If, we use what we call “*energisers*“, which are playful activities (such as doing a short team building exercise, or asking an unusual question). This helps keep the energy going and build good group dynamics.

There are plenty of ways to make people relax and adopt a constructive mindset. For example, Equal Experts, an IT consulting company, uses [icebreaker cards](https://www.equalexperts.com/blog/ee-life/icebreaker-cards/).

You can also change the energy in the room by varying activities: make the participants stand up, go to another room, work in pairs, or reflect on their own…

Even when the space isn’t the best, like a lecture theatre, you have to find ways to energise the participants (Workshop at London Business School)

1. **Be in the moment**

You have to drive the group. In a workshop, every participant follows your lead.

And at different moments, the group needs to be in different states. You have to adapt your own state to prime the rest of the group.

Running a workshop requires you to play various roles: at times you need to be a teacher, other times you become a coach facilitating what’s going on, and other times you are a leader driving the whole team in the same direction.

Some activities require a lot of energy, while others can require people to be more reflective. It’s up to you to get the group to that state.

1. **Be a good speaker**

A workshop isn’t a speech or lecture. But you need the ability to address and engage with an audience.

I listed [here](https://guerric.co.uk/public-speaking-checklist/) my top advice for speaking in public. What’s key in a workshop is that you can make this interactive. Tell them a story. Ask questions. Encourage the participants to illustrate the concepts you’re sharing with their personal experience.

There’s a wealth of knowledge that participants can share in a workshop.

1. **Use the space**

Most workshops end with tons of things stuck on the walls.

That’s because we often do our best thinking best when we use the space around us, rather than when we limit ourselves to a computer screen. Jake Knapp, Googler and the author of [Sprint](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0593076117?ie=UTF8&linkCode=xm2&camp=2025&creative=6738&tag=boostco-20&creativeASIN=0593076117&SubscriptionId=), a book about running innovation workshops, explains this phenomenon:

“As humans, our short-term memory is not all that good, but our spatial memory is awesome. A sprint room, plastered with notes, diagrams, printouts, and more, takes advantage of that spatial memory. The room itself becomes a sort of shared brain for the team.”

Two things are important here:

1. Using the space and sticking things on the wall help us **think more effectively**;
2. Landing outputs on the wall **encourages collaboration**, as all the work remains visible to everyone.
3. **Constantly assess what’s going on**

There’s the plan. And then, there’s the reality.

“In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable.”
― Dwight D. Eisenhower

Of course, you need a day plan. But once you’re in the arena, you also need to rely on your intuition to find the best ways to get to the ideal result.

It’s important to keep the main structure. However, since new things may come up, you also need to be flexible.

1. **Encourage collaboration**

Having many participants means that there are lots of different opinions in the room. As a workshop aims to be collaborative, it’s important that the team stays open-minded.

At ?What If!, we talk about “*greenhousing*“. This refers to three actions: suspend your judgment, understand what the person means, and nurture the idea.

In my workshops, I encourage participants to say things like “let me build on what you said…”. Have a read of [Sticky Wisdom](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1841120219?ie=UTF8&linkCode=xm2&camp=2025&creative=6738&tag=boostco-20&creativeASIN=1841120219&SubscriptionId=) that gets into the details of this and many other innovation behaviours.

People from Pixar talk about “*[plussing](https://intenseminimalism.com/2015/pixars-plussing-technique-of-giving-feedback/)*“. It is a similar approach but uses a different metaphor:

“The practice has been built on the core principles [of] improvisation, which are: accept all offers (accept the idea, don’t reject it), use “yes, and …” instead of “yes, but …”, and make your partner look good.”

In both cases, the ambition is the same: to encourage collaborative work (and keep a positive dynamic).

When someone just criticises an idea and doesn’t provide an alternative solution, or a means to improve the original idea, they’re not really helping the team. You can find more on the practice of group creativity techniques in [this article](https://guerric.co.uk/brainstorming/).

Watch out: What I said doesn’t mean that you should welcome all ideas. If an idea is irrelevant, find a way to refocus the conversation. You don’t want to waste everyone’s time with a discussion that is off topic.

1. **Highlight the progress**

Remind the participants of your goal at the beginning of the workshop. Then, talk them through the headlines of the journey to show how much progressed you’ve made.

Make sure they realise that the group did what needed to be done (answering important questions, making key decisions…). And put an emphasis on the key things they learnt.

Keep the outputs in front of them. It signals progress. You may even want to talk them through what the group achieved, step by step.

1. **Follow up**

Once the workshop is done, you need to keep the momentum going:

1. Highlight the key takeaways;
2. Share the outputs;
3. Explain the next steps and clearly underline the actions you’re expecting from them (put a name on each action, and give them a deadline).
4. **Enjoy**

The best way to run a great session is to make it as nice as possible. If you enjoy running it, the participants will feel that and it’ll motivate them too.

<https://guerric.co.uk/plan-run-great-workshop/>

**LESSON PLAN (46 mins); Explain here how each part went.**

1. Icebreaker:

2. Lesson:

3. Wrap Up:

4. Follow Up:

You Will Get to Know Names by:

Additional Activities for Those Done Early:

Three Stars:







One Wish:



**SELF-AWARENESS AND GROWTH:**

What were some issues that came up?

How did you deal with them?

What have you learned?

What do you need to do to prepare for next week?

Celebrate a mentorship success.

What else does Byrne need to know?

How can Byrne support you?

Anything else?