



**TAKE
ROOT
FEST**

LESSON PLAN GUIDE

**EDUCATION IS IMPROVING THE LIVES
OF OTHERS AND LEAVING THE WORLD
BETTER THAN YOU FOUND IT.**

- Marian Wright Edelman

ATTENDEE DEMOGRAPHIC

- » **Attendees are primarily interested in self-sufficiency, nature, DIY, and homesteading - both urban and rural** - as well as small-scale farming, market-gardening, herbalism, and in general reconnecting with the land and re-skilling.
- » **While we don't have concrete statistics, the majority of participants are females between 20-40 years of age.** There are a good number of families with children participating, as well as young adults. Thankfully, we do see a number of retirees and seniors each year as well!
- » **Attendees come with a mix of learning experience.** Generally, most people coming out are at the beginning or intermediate stages of learning, though we have had requests for more advanced level workshops. As this will be our fifth time running the festival, it would be a good time to introduce some intermediate and advanced workshops on topics we have run every year thus far.
- » **Attendees come for high-quality education.** They have expressed that they are interested in the businesses of their teachers, however only as an introductory mention. There has been some complaint of workshops coming across as long sales pitches. We really want to maintain integrity as a high-calibre educational event!

- » **Attendees come to learn in the most hands-on manner possible.** While we will always have to incorporate some larger-scale, presentation-style workshops simply to accommodate the number of attendees we have, our goal is to offer the highest quality, multi-sensory, engaging and hands-on workshops possible. Even in a presentation format, our participants expect to touch, smell, and see things that will aid their understanding of the given topic, and maybe to have the chance assist in a demonstration, even if there isn't an opportunity for every participant to do so.
- » **Attendees are not just interested in a trend.** They have big hearts and ready hands, hoping to leave the fest with practical skills they can implement at home. The overall feedback we get is that they would prefer to learn a specific skillset within a topic, rather than get a broad overview. There is, of course, a place for introductory information - we'd like to see that paired with at least one practical skill to come away with.

I USED TO THINK GREAT TEACHERS INSPIRE YOU. I THINK I HAD IT WRONG. GOOD TEACHERS INSPIRE YOU. GREAT TEACHERS SHOW YOU HOW TO INSPIRE YOURSELF EVERY DAY OF YOUR LIFE. THEY DON'T SHOW YOU THEIR MAGIC. THEY SHOW YOU HOW TO MAKE MAGIC OF YOUR OWN.

- Alfred Doblin

LESSON PLANNING

OUTLINE

Please break down your proposed workshop lesson plan for us. **This is not a repeat of your workshop description, but rather the plan you have in mind for how you'll use the time.** This includes an introduction of yourself and your business, an assessment of the prior knowledge in the room, and then the actual teaching time and how it is broken down into chunks of information, hands-on activities or experiences, perhaps a question period, and wrap-up.

INTRODUCTION

- » This is where you introduce **1) yourself 2) your business**, if applicable to the topic **3) your topic 4) your personal experience** with the topic.
- » Introductions should be limited to 5-10 minutes and are one of two times in the workshop that are suitable to discuss your business - the other being in the conclusion or wrap-up of the session.
- » We offer teachers a market space, where you're free to engage with attendees as a business. Please respect our environment of high-quality learning by keeping the majority of the workshop on track with teaching rather than promoting. Thanks!

MAIN POINTS

- » This may take you back to the days of writing essays with an intro, three or more main points that are formed within paragraphs, and a conclusion. A solid lesson plan is really built upon that foundation!

- » You might be an expert on a breadth of information within a given topic. However, it's best for participants if you **hone in on what you want them to learn**, and what they'll walk away being able to implement in their own life.
- » Create a list or a mind-map of the main points you want to cover in your workshop. Then break each main point down into digestible details that you can communicate to your participants.
- » **Don't stop there** - make a note for each main point of **how you'll teach that topic** - through anecdote, demonstration, walking participants through the actual physical process, or other.
- » **Assign a specific length of time for each main point.**

SENSORY AIDS

- » For each main point, create a list of aids or props you can bring along to help participants get a bigger and better picture of the point. **Some examples of sensory aids:**
 - » Fleece from a sheep that participants can pass around to touch. Even better? Fleece from several varieties of sheep, so the audience can compare and contrast the different types.
 - » Feathers from various breeds of chickens, to help participants learn to identify the different breeds you recommend for various areas in Canada.
 - » Equipment for seed starting, beekeeping, raising animals, dehydrating, cultivating mushrooms and more. Anything that is manageable to pass around or have available for participants to view post-workshop is fantastic.
 - » Photos that can be passed around as examples of things discussed in the workshop.

- » Live animals - we will have an animal village prepared for guest stars who need a coop, pen, or fenced area to hang out in during the fest.
- » Samples for participants to taste (think birch syrup vs maple syrup) or try out (think a homemade salve or samples of different natural building materials).
- » If you are having a tough time thinking of ways to engage your audience - please feel welcome to reach out - we love brainstorming ideas!

ACTIVITIES

Though your workshop may be more of a presentation style, if you're in one of our larger venues, think of ways to encourage attendees to be **active participants** rather than part of a **passive audience**. Make a list for each main point of an activity you can do to drive home the learning. You may not do all of them in the end, but making the list will help. Consider how much time each activity will take, how well it will work with various workshop sizes, and the materials that will be required. **Some activities might include:**

- » Inviting participants to talk to a small group of others sitting nearby - maybe to brainstorm a solution to a problem (for example - a calculation for a holistic management plan, a permaculture garden solution, or trouble-shooting fermentation)
- » Providing opportunities for audience members to vote, share short stories, ask questions, etc.
- » Having volunteers come up to the front to demonstrate a skill.
- » Taking the group out of the venue for a demonstration, to go for a walk, etc.

- » Getting participants to try out a skill such as tapping a log, carding wool, putting up a portable fence, building something, planting seeds or seedlings, etc.
- » The main point here is that your workshop should not be an audio version of a hand-out. You can provide a hand-out for your participants, that they can refer to for step-by-step learning. **Workshops at the fest are meant to inspire and engage learners and provide them with practical skills.**

TAKE-AWAYS

What, if anything will you send your participants home with? A hand-out, a sample, seeds to plant, something they made or helped to make, etc? This could be something that each participant takes home, or a larger item or two (equipment, some of your product, books, etc.) that all participants are entered into a draw to win. For a very hands-on workshop, an option could be that all participants are entered into a draw to win what is made (chicken coop, block of soap, oyster mushroom pail, etc.).

CONCLUSION

This is where you can drive your point home, make connections, take questions, once again mention your business if applicable, and provide ways your participants can connect with you in the future. You are also welcome to sign up to do an on-site demo or have a market table, and invite participants to join you in that space after the workshop to connect with them on that level.

FEEDBACK FROM PAST WORKSHOPS

These might give you an idea of what to strive for and avoid!

TRY INCORPORATING THESE!

- » Good idea to have a **demonstration**.
- » Nice to see it **built and finished** by end of day.
- » Lots of **humour and knowledge** shared.
- » The workshop leader was **passionate, kind** and very **knowledgeable**. Real DIY workshop with **actual hands on building**.
- » Great teacher, learned a lot in a short time, they shared information in a really **pleasant manner** and **answered lots of questions very knowledgeably**.

note from fest: 1) it's okay to defer questions to the end IF you jot them down so you actually get back to them. Participants get irked when they feel neglected. 2) it's also okay to say you don't know, and you'd be happy to take their contact info and get back to them.

- » Great to make something and **see exactly how the process works**, even if in the most simple form.
- » Very knowledgeable and very **skilled at speaking so people understand**.
- » Loved that it was **hands on**. Very informal and **well put together**. Very **willing to answer questions and explain everything**.
- » Got to **see other people try things**, which was helpful, even if we didn't all get to.
- » Very interesting and **made me want to go home and get started**.

LEARN FROM THESE...

- » Would be interesting to have **samples** or something.
- » More **hands on** next time.
- » More **group discussion** would be nice.
- » **Visuals** would have added to the presentation.
- » Would have liked to have a **handout** summarizing what they were showing us.
- » I wish that it would have been **more structured**.
- » Next time, would like more ideas of **how to bring the information into my life in a practical way**.
- » Workshop leader **tried to cover too much** and ran out of time.
- » A lot of information, but **didn't really get into all the aspects of starting up yourself**.
- » Sparked interest, but you **couldn't go home and try to do anything from the workshop besides do more research**.
- » Presentation **could be more concise**.
- » I would have liked a step-by-step outline of the process. A lot of information but I **didn't leave feeling like I could take this on**.
- » I loved this, but I think it **might have been a little too lecture-ish for some?**

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PARTICIPANTS WANT WELL-ORGANIZED WORKSHOPS THAT GIVE THEM THE SKILLS AND INSPIRATION THEY NEED TO TAKE THE FIRST (OR NEXT) STEP IN THEIR JOURNEY IN RELATION TO THE TOPIC AT HAND.

THEY WOULD RATHER LEARN ONE OR TWO SPECIFIC SKILLS - AND THE MATERIALS AND RESOURCES THEY NEED TO GET STARTED AT HOME - THAN GET A BROAD OVERVIEW OF ALL THE INS AND OUTS.

THEY'D RATHER TOUCH, TASTE, SMELL, SEE AND MOVE - THAN SIMPLY SIT AND LISTEN.

**TELL ME AND I'LL FORGET.
SHOW ME AND I MAY REMEMBER.
INVOLVE ME AND I LEARN.**

- Benjamin Franklin