

Tips for Effective Time Management

by Jeanette Romkema

Managing time is a challenge for even the most seasoned facilitators. Here are a few tips to help you ensure you facilitate the planned learning design in the designated time:

1. **Start on time.** When learners don't arrive on time, it can be challenging to know when to start. It's okay to wait a few minutes, but in general work to start on time. This will also show respect to those who are there.
2. **Use two time pieces.** Having a clock on the wall is critical and having a watch or other timing device with/near you at all times, helps you for 100% awareness of the minutes and hours. Time has a way of passing by quickly unless you monitor it constantly.
3. **State how much time each task is when you give it.** When learners know how much time they have, it will not be a surprise when you call them back to the large group after engaging in a learning task. If timing is short, stating it can also help energize learners.
4. **If you are working with a co-facilitator, ask him/her to be your timekeeper.** It is sometimes a challenge to monitor time when there are other things demanding your attention i.e. questions from learners. Relying on your co-facilitators in this way can be easy and helpful.
5. **Mark the time breakdown in your workshop design.** Making notes to yourself about timing, materials and things to mention while facilitating can help you stay fully focused.
6. **Use learners.** Sometimes asking a learner to let you know when a certain amount of time has passed, can be helpful. In some cases this request can help a learner focus and feel validated.
7. **Be flexible.** Sometimes a learning task will take more or less time than you expect – don't be afraid to adjust your workshop accordingly. You are responsible to ensure learners are meaningfully engaged and have enough time to work with and personalize the new content. Although a well-thought out learning design needs to be followed and trusted, as you learn more about the people in the room and their needs, changes may need to be made.
8. **Check outside factors that may impact your planned time and timing.** Although you may have the learning event perfectly planned out, life has a funny way of throwing curve balls. Check with those in the building and in the group for things like: lunch bells, outside meetings, others using the room, or events in the area. The fewer surprises the better.