

2.1 Key Considerations Video Script

Sometimes, workshops come to life because presenters are invited by an organization to teach in an area they are known for. Other times, a presenter may recognize that they have a particular skill or area of expertise that others will benefit from.

Either way, it's helpful to ask yourself a few foundational questions before you get into the nitty-gritty of your workshop planning.

[Generating ideas]

Do you specialize in a particular genre or have a specific area of expertise? What do you have extensive experience in, and what would you feel most confident teaching?

Since one-off workshops are typically short, it's usually best to focus on a specific topic rather than something too broad. This focus helps participants to gain more meaningful, practical insights from the session.

On the screen are a few examples taken from past Federation of BC Writers workshops:

- *5 Ways to Unstick a Story* with Lisa Hislop
- *Unfiltered: Avoiding Filter Words to Strengthen Your Writing* with Tara Avery
- *Social Media Engagement - Learn how to further support your writing community* with Bryan Mortensen
- *Resilient Writers: Dealing with Rejection, Negativity, and (Inner) Critics* with Christina Myers

If you don't yet have a clear idea of what you want your workshop to be about, try brainstorming in a way that works for you - bubbles, post-it notes, lists, scribbles in a notebook. Keep collecting ideas until you find one that sparks your inspiration.

[Time]

How much time has been allotted to your workshop?

Begin to consider how you might structure this time; how long could your presentation take compared to your activities, for example? How long might you have for discussions and questions? You don't need to finalize the timings yet, but it is helpful to start visualizing how the session might flow.

It's always a good idea to add in some buffer time! Sessions often take longer than expected, especially the first few times you present them.

[Workshop Type]

Writing workshops can largely be split into three categories:

1. *Generative* - where the aim is to generate new material, usually centered around a focused theme or genre. Explanations and examples are covered before a specified amount of time is given to participants to create their own piece of work. Time is usually given at the end of the workshop for everyone to reconvene and discuss their experiences or share their work.
2. *Critique* - where participants bring their work to discuss and have it critiqued. These workshops are often held over a longer period of time (think of the FBCW's Writing

Circles, for example).

3. *Technique* - where there is a very narrow focus on one aspect of writing, and the time is used to take a deep dive into one specific element of writing, such as dialogue, point of view, or structure. They may be more presentation-based or interactive, depending on the approach of the presenter.

[Drawing from your own experience]

Think back to the best workshops you have been to:

- What made them successful and memorable?
- How did they keep you engaged?
- How did the presenter hold your attention?
- What kind of activities or discussions were included?

It can also be valuable to reflect on less successful workshop experiences:

- What did not work for you as a participant?
- What feedback did you or would you give to the presenter?

Learning from both positive and negative experiences will help you design a more effective, engaging and enjoyable workshop for your participants.