

IV. Workshop Tasks

When you have finished planning and preparing for the workshop, you can focus your attention on setting up and conducting the workshop. When the workshop is over, do not forget a few essential post-workshop tasks that will need to be completed. These tasks are described below.

Setting Up

Allow yourself at least 60 to 90 minutes to set up the workshop space. If possible, you may want to set up the night before the workshop. By setting things up in advance, you will be more at ease.

If you are not already familiar with the workshop site, locate restrooms, the quickest or easiest way outside (for outdoor activities), and light switches and plugs for audio-visual presentations. If you will be using any audio-visual equipment, test and set it up in advance.

Remember, the arrangement of tables and chairs can help or hinder your workshop. Arrange the room in a way you feel will best accommodate your workshop goals. For example, if you will be presenting both small group and large group activities, arrange tables and chairs to promote small group activities and enable participants to get up and move around in larger groups. If it is a smaller group, a circle of chairs may be most appropriate. When possible, try to avoid the traditional "row of desks" arrangement!

Set up the materials you will be using so they will be easily accessible when you need them. You might want to establish one table as your "home base" and place on it the items you will need during the workshop such as handouts and materials for the PLT activities you will lead. It is a good idea to mark your resource materials as "PLT Property" or participants may assume them to be there for the taking! Consider setting up a separate table for resources which can be freely taken by participants.

Set up a table near the entrance with a sign-in sheet, name tags, and pens. If you like, make a sign that asks participants to make name tags for themselves and to print their names on the sign-in sheet as they would like them to appear on their PLT certificates. You may want to set up a separate table to display materials such as children's books

about trees and forests, sample student projects for specific PLT activities and other teacher resources.

Post the workshop agenda where everyone can see it or have copies available for each participant on the sign-in table. If beverages or snacks will be provided, set up a convenient, but separate snack area.

Conducting the Workshop

If possible, allow time before the workshop to greet individuals attending the workshop. This will help participants feel welcome and will also help you feel more at ease with the group as a whole, especially if you do not already know the workshop participants.

Begin and end the workshop on time to be fair to those who come on time. Throughout the workshop, keep in mind the checklist of facilitator skills (described in Appendix A). Keep an eye on the pacing of activities and when participants need a break or a change of pace.

For one-day workshops, some facilitators like to fill in the PLT certificates during the lunch break so that they can distribute them at the end of the workshop.

Be sure to reserve time at the end of the workshop for participants to fill out the Participant Survey Forms. In exchange for the completed forms, participants may receive their PLT certificates.

Post-Workshop Tasks

When the workshop is over, pat yourself on the back! Then take time to do the following tasks.

Sending Forms to State Coordinator

As soon after the workshop as possible, complete the Facilitator Survey Form and mail it to the State Coordinator, along with the completed Participant Survey forms. Without these forms, the State Coordinator cannot place participants on the mailing list to receive future mailings or provide needed participant data to the national PLT office.

Evaluating the Workshop

Spend some time evaluating the workshop for yourself: What went well and what things would you like to improve for the next workshop? Jot down your thoughts, or use the Facilitator Skills Checklist on page V-1 for a guide. You will find these personal notes helpful to you when planning future workshops.

Participant Feedback

Read the participant survey forms to find out what went well and what did not go so well from their perspective. This information provides a way to gauge the program's strengths and weaknesses and start the process of making improvements.

Additional Follow-Up (Optional, but very desirable)

The extent of your post-workshop follow-up will depend on your available time and resources. If time permits, a thank you note to each participant along with a summary of key concepts and a list of names and addresses of the workshop participants is helpful. This helps participants begin their own local PLT network. If you did not distribute the certificates during the workshop, you may send them with a thank you note.

If participants will be receiving college, university, or district credit for attending your workshop, provide the follow-up needed to secure their credits.

Teachers and curriculum specialists may appreciate additional follow-up to determine the long-term effectiveness of their in-service training programs. A few weeks after the workshop, you may decide to telephone a few of the participants to see how they are doing with the activities. If appropriate, suggest that they contact other workshop participants to compare notes regarding effective ways of using PLT. You might send a brief follow-up questionnaire to some or all of your group at the end of the school year to see what overall success they have had with the activities. This can provide you with good justification for future workshops, and indicate where your workshop might benefit from changes and modifications.