

NAS

NATIONAL ARTS STRATEGIES

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Inspiring and Motivating Arts and Culture Teams

Group Learning Guide

We've created this guide as a complement to our Inspiring and Motivating Arts and Culture Teams online course to support those who want to learn in a group context.

OVERVIEW

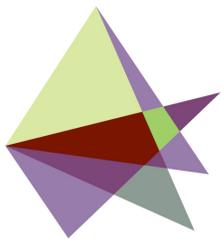
Why learn as a group?

Online courses offer many benefits to the learner in terms of affordability (this one is free!), flexibility in scheduling, convenience and pacing. Moving through online coursework with a group adds another layer to the learning, giving participants the opportunity to discuss content in depth and explore ideas for putting learning into action. Whether organizational affiliation, an affinity network or a peer group connects learners, collaborative learning supports those who want to explore content with a particular context in mind. Finally, collaborative learning helps group members keep each other accountable to their individual learning goals.

What kind of group should go through this course together?

This course is designed for people who manage others, whether that be direct-report employees or a group of volunteers. Much of the course content relates to uncovering specific team member motivations and levels of engagement, so it may not be a course you would want to take alongside those you supervise or those you report to. Your colleagues at work who share a similar role, your peers in the arts and culture field (i.e. Emerging Arts Leaders groups) or your discipline-specific networks (i.e. fellow members of a service organization) would be great candidates for group members. We suggest a group size of 3 to 7 learners so that a variety of viewpoints can be shared within the hour of weekly meeting time.

This group learning guide works both for groups intending to meet in person and groups intending to meet virtually, so don't let geographic location be a limitation.



SETTING UP GROUP LEARNING

Once you've recruited your group members, you'll want to take some steps in advance of starting the course to plan your work together. Below we've listed some things to consider in your planning.

Tools for connecting

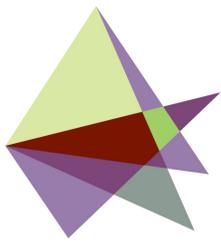
Whether you're meeting in person or online, you'll want to consider how each of these elements can support your collaborative work:

- **Video conferencing:** If you're ever planning to meet virtually, decide in advance what service works best for the group. Some free services we like are Google, Zoom and Skype.
- **Private discussion areas:** The EdX platform provides discussion forums for the entire class of learners. We recommend that you set up a private discussion area to share ideas and responses to course prompts with group members only. Even if your group will always meet in person, it's helpful to create some course-related private discussion forums so that group members can share their thoughts as they move through the course lectures. You'll notice that throughout the course, the faculty pose questions in their lecture videos and there are corresponding discussion boards set up to capture learner responses. You can simply copy these prompts into your private discussion area. Email chains, while great for reminding group members about meeting times, can be difficult for managing conversations. Instead, look for a message board service where different threaded conversations can take place. Some free services we like are Facebook (set up a group) and Slack.

SCHEDULING TIME

Before you get started on the course, you'll want to set a learning/meeting schedule for your group, including a pre and a post-course meeting to set goals and reflect upon the experience. We've set up this course to be self-paced. You can begin at any time and return to certain lessons as you need to. Although the content is grouped into five weekly units, you can take as long as you need to move through it.

Our beta-testers have told us that learners can expect to take 4-6 hours/week to move through the course individually, including time to watch lectures, respond to discussion prompts and complete quizzes and activities. We suggest taking an additional hour per week to work together as a group, including an hour-long meeting the week before the course starts to set intentions for learning and the week after it



concludes to establish individual and group next steps. A sample schedule is [available here](#).

TIPS FOR GROUP LEADERS/FACILITATORS

As a group leader/facilitator, your job is not to be a content expert, but rather to help others think more deeply about the content and reach the goals the group has set in weekly meetings. Here are some strategies for facilitating and practices you may wish to involve in your meetings:

- **During your pre-course meeting**, have each group member set a goal for themselves, such as completing all activities on time or attending every group meeting. Suggest that group members form pairs or trios to serve as "accountability partners" and help each other stay on track.
- **If you share an office space with your group members**, consider claiming a physical space such as a wall or white board where learners can post questions or insights related to the course throughout the week. Come back to these posts during your weekly meeting.
- **In addition to sharing some questions and insights publicly**, ask learners to keep a journal of how the course content relates to their work.
- **When discussing each others' activity submissions, consider using the feedback framework "I like, I wish, what if"** (as in "I liked that you considered your introversion a super power, I wish you could bring more detail to your vision statement, what if you tried shortening the vision statement for clarity?").
- **Know that questions are powerful.** In your discussions, if all group members tend to be gravitating toward the same response, play "devil's advocate" in order to shake up the conversation.

GROUP DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITY LIST

We've created a special version of the syllabus for groups. This lists the weekly video lectures, as well as all discussion questions and activities. Your group should look through this discussion and activity guide together during your pre-course meeting. You can find the group discussion and activity list [here](#).