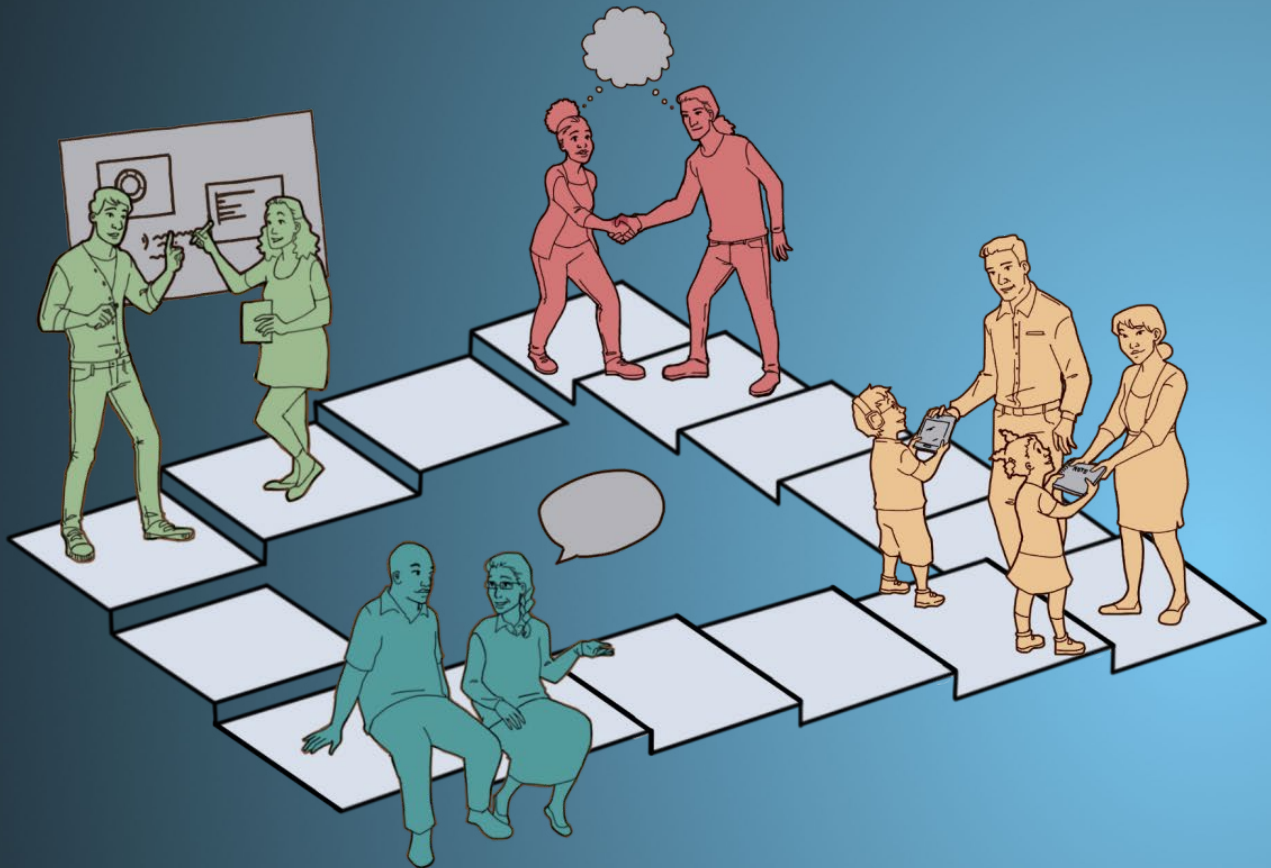


# 11.154x: Launching Innovation in Schools



## FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

BASED ON [P2PU'S LEARNING CIRCLES FACILITATOR HANDBOOK](#)

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# Welcome to the Facilitator's Guide

We believe that your learning experience in Launching Innovation in Schools will be most powerful if you can take the course with colleagues from your school or learning organization in a **learning circle**. A **learning circle** is a facilitated, in-person study group for learners who are all registered in the course.

## Why should you start or join a learning circle?

This course is designed to encourage you to incorporate what you learn in your context as soon as possible, and your learning circle could provide you encouragement, support, perspectives, and more to help you as you do. No one knows your school or context better than the people who work there everyday. Asking your colleagues to join you in taking this course is a step toward building a cohort of change leaders where you work. Two learners from the previous run of the course found their learning circles to be a powerful part of the course:



High school computer science teacher Douglas Kiang says, "I think one of the things that came out of the learning circle was that we developed trust in the group, and it made it easier to talk about things that were difficult ... with a lot of people together, when we realize that we're really not alone in this, that we can work together and help make this a better place for all of us, that, I think for me, was the real power of the learning circle."



PreK-8 Head of Academic Technology Megan Haddadi says, "Learning circles [were] one of my favourite parts of this course. To be honest, learning online can feel really impersonal, but having that face-to-face connection with my colleagues on a weekly basis really made a difference for me in this course."

## What is the Facilitator's Guide?

We've created this Facilitator's Guide to give you the tools you need to lead a learning circle. In this guide are suggested discussion topics and activities for meetings, but **we encourage your learning circle to interact with the course in the ways that seem most valuable and productive for your needs**. The way in which your learning circle engages with the course is entirely up to you. You might work on the course online independently, and then find time to come together to discuss what you are learning. It might be that members of your group watch certain videos on their own time and discuss those videos in-person. Maybe your group does assignments together each week.

## **The Facilitator's Guide has ideas and strategies for working collaboratively, including:**

- Messaging for getting and keeping participants organized
- Video discussion questions to start conversations about the the presentations from Peter and Justin and Voices in Practice
- Strategies for making assignments and activities more collaborative
- Tips from a former facilitator of a Launching Innovation in Schools learning circle

## **We've also provided Activity Take-Out Packages:**

Throughout the course, Peter and Justin will share leadership practices that help teams launch innovation together. We've modified many of these practices so that they work well for our on-line community, but we also hope that you'll adapt them and use them with colleagues in your own schools. Take-out packages provide facilitators' tips and other resources for leading these practices in your own community.

**Note:** When clicking links throughout the Facilitator's Guide, please open them in a new tab.

- [Four Corners](#)
- [Rightboro Scenarios](#)
- [Left-Hand Column Case](#)
- [Evaluation Scenarios](#)

# Learning Circle Logistics

## Before the Course Launches

Here are some things you'll need to do as a facilitator before beginning the course:

### Gather Your Learners (learning circles work best with 4 to 10 members)

- Consider inviting people to participate by announcing it during a staff meeting, emailing out invitations, or posting on social media. Also reach out face-to-face or via email directly to individuals who you think might be interested.
- In [Appendix I](#) of the Guide, we've offered some suggestions for how to communicate to your networks, as well as the course flyer.

### Set a meeting space and time

- Consider what resources the room needs. How will everyone see the course materials? Does the room have a projector? Or does everyone have laptops/tablets/etc.? How will the table be set up? Ideally, everyone will be in a circle. Your role as facilitator is not to stand at the front of the room, lecture-style, but to be an equal member of the learning circle.
- Are there any other supplies you'll need? Are you requiring members to bring anything like pens or paper?

### Connect by email or whatever works regarding logistics

- You want to spend the first week of the course exploring content, not figuring out how regularly you'll meet or who will bring snacks (snacks are highly recommended).

### Read through the Facilitator's Guide

- Read through this guide before the course begins so that you get a good overview of the course and can plan meetings accordingly.

### Email Reminders

- A few days before your first meeting, email out a reminder.

## During the Course

While this guide will provide you with suggestions for how each session might run, you should customize the learning circle experience to your group. **Do not feel pressured to try to cover all of the material that is offered.** Choose the activities that seem exciting and relevant for your learning circle. Be flexible. It's okay to get off track from the suggested agenda if you are engaged in a productive discussion. **We encourage you to spend the bulk of your time doing activities together as a group or discussing your progress with the assignments.**

Here is a sample of what an agenda might look like given a one-hour meeting:

**0:00 - 0:05 Welcome and Checkins**  
**0:05 - 0:15 Video Discussion**  
**0:15 - 0:30 Activity Discussion**  
**0:30 - 0:55 Assignment Discussion**  
**0:55 - 1:00 Plus/Delta Closing**

**Check-in:** Spend the first few minutes reviewing the previous meeting and any action taken since the previous meeting.

## Coursework

- **Video Discussion Questions:** You should begin discussion of the videos by asking the group for general thoughts and impressions. What was surprising about the video? What would you like to know more about? What were two important takeaways? We will provide discussion questions as suggestions, but feel free to discuss what your group is most interested in.
- **Activity Discussion:** We will provide some guidelines for doing the activity with your learning circle.
- **Assignment Discussion:** We will provide guidelines for how to begin thinking about the assignments. If your learning circle has already completed assignments before the meeting, use this time to give each other feedback.

**Plus/Delta:** Spend the last five minutes sharing something positive about the meeting, and what learners hope to improve for the next meeting.

## Afterwards

Send a short summary email to all learners and a reminder about the next meeting.

If you find that our sample agenda or suggested discussion topics don't work for your group, we encourage you to do as much or as little as best suits your group's needs.

# First Meeting

**Course Introduction:** Make sure everyone is on the same page about the course by giving an overview:

**Length:** At least 7 Weeks\*

**Time Commitment:** ~ 2-4 hrs/wk

**Price:** FREE, Add Verified Certificate for \$49

**What you'll learn about:**

- Bringing people together around ideas they care about
- Refining a vision and creating coherence
- Getting started with a new instructional improvement initiative
- Working together through challenges and successes
- Measuring progress and adjusting along the way

\*Because the course is self-paced, you'll have some choice about how long your circle will take to complete, but we recommend at least 7 weeks.

## Logistics

For the first meeting, you should decide how you will take the course with your learning circle. Here are a few points to figure out to get you started:

### What are your goals for this course as a group?

Do you want the work from this course to be the foundation for launching a specific change initiative? Or are you looking just to get to know what your colleagues in the room care about? You might go around the room and ask your fellow learners what they hope comes from this experience. Are any of them working toward a certificate? Will this count as professional development?

### When, where, for how long, and how frequently will you meet?

Do you plan to meet every week? Or do you plan to meet more or less frequently? The course is self-paced, so you have some flexibility about how fast or how slow you work. That said, it's important to come to a consensus about when you will focus on which material so that everyone can be on the same page. Take a look at your calendars, the course calendar and the units in the course and decide how you would like to focus your time. Use group responses to create a shared calendar.



"If you can't have a face-to-face meeting every week, I suggest meeting at the beginning to launch the course, after units 3 & 4, and at the end of the course as a celebration/showcase!"

**-Megan, former Launching Innovation in Schools learning circle facilitator**

### What work will be done inside and outside of the learning circle?

Everyone in the learning circle should be registered for the course. However, we know that educators are incredibly busy. You should agree as a group what work members of your circle will commit to doing on their own time, and what work the group will do together. For example, you might consider doing all of the activities as a group, but working on the assignments alone. Or the reverse! **Not all learners have to commit to the same amount of work.** Make sure that members of your circle feel welcome to be as flexible as possible.

### How will work be done during learning circle time?

Do you want to work through the course on a projector or on personal laptops? What time limits do you want to give for each segment of the course? What are your priorities as a group?

### How will you interact with the forums?

For Launching Innovation in Schools, participants will use the forums to submit assignments, provide peer feedback, participate in virtual groups, and to discuss course content with educators from diverse backgrounds. Your learning circle can take advantage of the forums in these ways.

Logistics and goals should be permanently and readily accessible for anyone in the group. This might be in the form of a shared online document, a poster hung in the room, etc. **Be sure to also send an email summary of what was decided after this meeting.**

"Some people in your learning circle will fall behind and may feel stressed or overwhelmed. Encourage them to come to your face-to-face gatherings even if they have fallen behind in their work, because **everyone has something they can add to the group, and everyone can take some wisdom away from the group as well.** It will help to have a backup plan for those who have fallen behind as well. Partner them with one another and encourage them to read the articles together or watch the videos during the learning circle time. In other words, help them get caught up, and assist their progress moving forward through the material." **-Megan**



# Unit 0: Welcome!

**Check-in:** Spend the first few minutes reviewing learning circle logistics and the group's goals for the course.

## Coursework

### Video Discussion Questions

***This We Believe:*** Because this video launches the course and one of the frameworks for school change, we recommend watching this video together in-person.

- If you were to create your own cycle of launching innovation, would you include these phases? Would you include others?
- Have your group think of a recent project or initiative your school has been involved in. Can they identify the four phases of the cycle of launching innovation from the project? What was challenging about each of the phases? What was exciting?

### ***Why Change?***

- Think about your school and the kinds of tasks it asks of its students. What is the balance between routine tasks and more complex tasks? Are you happy with that balance?
- Does your school prepare students to solve ill-structured problems or communicate effectively?

### Forums Discussion

#### ***Groups***

One of the benefits of taking an online course is interacting with learners from a variety of contexts and backgrounds who might have a unique perspective on the problems you and your group are facing. Check out the "Groups" section in the forums. Have any groups formed so far? Are there any groups that you feel would be particularly relevant for your learning circle members to follow or join? Discuss possible groups that your members might start or facilitate.

#### ***Review the Forums and Peer Review Guidelines together***

You should encourage members of your learning circle to participate in the forums after your meeting.

**Plus/Delta:** Spend the last five minutes sharing something positive about the meeting, and what learners hope to improve for the next meeting.

## After the Meeting

Send a short summary email to all members and a reminder about the next meeting. We've provided a template for you, but feel free to modify this based on what works for your learning circle.

### Email Template:

*Thank you for coming to the Unit 0 meeting of our Launching Innovation in Schools learning circle! In this meeting, **we focused on** \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Remember, this course does not have to begin and end during the learning circle! Think about it as an extension of your own practice. Between now and the next meeting, consider your personal "Why Change". What in your practice motivates you to change schooling? What motivates your colleagues?*

*The next meeting will be \_\_\_\_\_. We will focus on **Unit 1: Launching Innovation in Schools**. We'll learn more about theories and frameworks of change leadership and be introduced to our first two assignments.*

*Hope to see you then!*

# Unit 1: Launching Innovation in Schools

**Check-in:** Spend the first few minutes reviewing the last meeting.

## Coursework

### Video Discussion Questions

#### *Voices in Practice: Mashpee Public Schools*

- Teacher Amanda Hough says: “Society is constantly changing... if you are not willing to morph and change in your curriculum, how are those students going to learn to change outside in the real world?” (2:47) If you’re working in a school, has your current school been thoughtful about changing expectations for graduates in response to how society is changing?
- Interim Superintendent Patty DeBoer says: “It’s a slow shift sometimes for teachers to wear the hat of the student” (6:01). What are some barriers that you have come across when trying to understand the student perspective?
- Principal Mark Balestracci notes the importance of two of our course themes, reflection and iteration, when he says: “We’ve been able to assess and refine our implementation over such a short period of time [by coming] back together to be able to reflect on the things that we’ve done” (10:52). How does your school or organization reflect? How often does your school or organization reflect?

#### *Systems Thinking*

Teacher Douglas Kiang says: “Students and faculty often see the systems of a school differently simply because of their perspective” (3:18). Discuss how different stakeholders (parents, students, teachers, administrators, community members) might see the system of a school differently. What are the advantages of having a diversity of system perspectives? What are the challenges?

### Activity Discussion

#### *Interview a Student (Optional)*

You might ask people to specifically view the PBS video beforehand so that you can discuss the video in-person. You might also ask people to try interviewing a student and share their experiences with the group. Then ask the group what surprised them about talking to students? What upset them? What made them want to learn more? What did they hope the student would say that the student didn’t say?

## Assignment Discussion

### *Activity: Description of a Powerful Learning Environment*

- Go around the room and have each person talk about their idea of a powerful learning environment. Ask them what it feels, looks and sounds like. Record the descriptions somewhere visible to everyone.
- Now compare the ideas. What are the commonalities? Do the commonalities align to the school, district, community values? What are the differences and why? Having people discuss where their powerful learning environments differ helps you to better understand each other as educators.
- If you have time, have the group look through what others have said in the forums. Compare your group's thinking to that of other learners in the course.

### *Assignment 1: Defining a Problem of Practice*

- Starting with this assignment, there are two possibilities for tackling the rest of the course as a learning circle. 1) Each member of your learning circle has a personal problem of practice (or people form small groups). The benefit of this approach is that everyone will be passionate about what they work on for the rest of the course. The other approach is that 2) the learning circle as a whole tackles the same problem of practice. Having more people focused on one problem will increase the amount of work that gets done toward solving the problem.
- Which approach you take should depend on how aligned the passions of everyone in the room are. Take some time to discuss what the group thinks is the best use of their time with this course. Then let the discussion from Activity: Powerful Learning Environment influence your work toward defining a problem of practice.
- If learning circle members are tackling individual problems of practice, have them share out to the group. Collect all problems of practice in a shared Google doc or on a poster so that everyone in the group is aware of what everyone else is working on and can think about how they might help.

**Plus/Delta:** Spend the last five minutes sharing something positive about the meeting, and what learners hope to improve for the next meeting.

## After the Meeting

Send a short summary email to all members and a reminder about the next meeting.

**Email Template:**

*Thank you for coming to the Unit 1 meeting of our Launching Innovation in Schools learning circle! In this meeting, we focused on \_\_\_\_\_. (If your learning circle is working on a single problem of practice) Our learning circle's problem of practice for this course is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm excited to work on this problem with you! (If your learning circle is working on multiple problems) Some of the problems of practice our learning circle are working on include \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Remember, this course does not have to begin and end during the learning circle! Think about it as an extension of your own practice. Between now and the next meeting, think about how you might informally interview a student or look for aspects of your powerful learning environment or problem of practice in our school.*

*The next meeting will be \_\_\_\_\_. We will focus on **Unit 2: Bringing People Together Around Ideas They Care About**. We'll learn about the actions of leadership and the importance of bringing people on board for a new initiative.*

*Hope to see you then!*

## Unit 2: Bringing People Together Around Ideas They Care About

**Check-in:** Spend the first few minutes reviewing the previous meeting and any action taken since. Did any of your learning circle members interview a student? Did they see evidence of their powerful learning environment throughout the school? Briefly discuss how the course might have impacted them since the last meeting.

### Coursework

#### Video Discussion Questions

##### *Bringing People Together*

- Who do you see as a leader in your school or organization? These leaders do not have to be defined by a formal position such as the principal or superintendent, but rather by their effectiveness at bringing people together. Make a list of leaders in your school or organization and what qualities make them effective at bringing people together. Does your group agree on who the leaders are? Does your group agree on the effective qualities of a leader?
- How does your school provide opportunities for teacher leadership?
- Have group members discuss their own sphere of influence within the school. Where does each member believe they can make the most change?

##### *Shrewsbury Public Schools: Engaging and Empowering Students*

- Teacher Erin Kendrick says: "Being collaborative means really honoring multiple perspectives" (0:42). With this definition in mind, do you feel your school or organization is collaborative? What programs are in place to help your school or organization hear multiple stakeholder perspectives?
- Student Benjamin describes how the principal reached out to students for help with rolling out the 1:1 iPad initiative (2:48). How does your school engage and empower students when launching new programs? What kind of relationships do students and adults have in your school?

##### *Phillips Academy Andover: Community-Driven, Shared Vision*

- John Palfrey and Caroline Nolan made a point of understanding Phillips Academy Andover traditions and beliefs before bringing in something new. Caroline says: "As a new person coming into this kind of environment, it's so important to let the environment shape the vision" (3:27). What long-standing traditions and beliefs does your community have that you would have to grapple with before launching something new?

- Andover student Tanvi says, “Oftentimes, the students are the teachers and the teachers are the students” (6:32). If students at your school have an idea for change, where would they go to make that change happen? Who would they go to for support? What resources are available to them? Is this encouraged at your school?

## Activity Discussion

### Four Corners

Follow the instructions in the [Four Corners take-out package](#).

### Network Map

- Follow the instructions for this activity in the platform. This activity asks you to think about a recent project you have completed in the school to brainstorm a list of helpful people. If members of your group worked on the same project, consider having them spend some time first brainstorming individually, and then spend time working in pairs or as a group.

## Assignment Discussion

### Asset Map

- The benefit of taking this course in a learning circle is that the people in the room can now become valuable assets. Ask each learning circle member how they can be an asset to the group’s problem of practice or to any individual problems of practice. Consider asking other group members to weigh in on how people describe themselves as assets.
- Consider taking one member’s problem of practice and using the collective brainpower of the group to dive deeper into the assignment. Thinking about school and community assets for one problem of practice might help others as well. If you have the time, you can focus on a second problem of practice or you can have people work in smaller groups. For each asset category listed in the assignment instructions (community values, community resources, etc.), have each member brainstorm 2-3 sticky notes. Then come together as a group to build the asset map on something everyone in the room can see, like a wall, whiteboard, or large sheet of paper.
- You might have members develop their asset maps ahead of this meeting to discuss them as a group. Ask members what was challenging and rewarding about creating their asset maps. Among the maps in the group, were any assets surprising or unexpected?

## Forums Discussion

Ask group members to discuss their experience with providing and receiving peer feedback. Did anyone see any excellent examples?



**Plus/Delta:** Spend the last five minutes sharing something positive about the meeting, and what learners hope to improve for the next meeting.

## After the Meeting

Send a short summary email to all members and a reminder about the next meeting.

### Email Template:

*Thank you for coming to the Unit 2 meeting of our Launching Innovation in Schools learning circle! In this meeting, we focused on \_\_ (include some description of the activities) \_\_\_\_\_. I thought it was particularly interesting that\_\_\_\_\_.*

*Between now and the next meeting, think about the resources we discussed today and how you might reach out to them. Even beginning to discuss your problem of practice with a colleague is a great first step!*

*The next meeting will be \_\_\_\_\_. We will focus on **Unit 3a: Refining a Vision**. In this partial unit, we'll learn about the importance of having a coherent vision for any change initiative.*

*Hope to see you then!*

Note: We recommend using one meeting for Unit 3a content and another meeting for Unit 3b content.

## Unit 3a: Refining a Vision

**Check-in:** Spend the first few minutes reviewing the previous meeting and any action taken since. Did people start to use their asset maps?

### Coursework

#### Video Discussion Questions

##### Coherence

- To what degree does your school have radical teacher autonomy? What are the strongest sites of collaboration?
- When your school or organization launches a new initiative, how does it clearly convey its goals to stakeholders? What makes that communication effective? How can your school or organization improve its communication?

##### *Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School: Cohesive Around STEM*

- What is the vision for your school? Where did the vision come from? Was the vision top-down, grassroots, or a mixture of both?
- Executive Director Sherley Bretous describes how “[Banneker] kids weren’t seeing themselves reflected in the science and technology fields” (1:37), as one motivation for developing the school’s STEM focus. How does equity factor into your school’s mission or values?
- Sherley also says: “Teachers are a fundamental component of driving our vision because they are the ones ... on the ground” (5:36). What is the role of teachers and administrators in implementing your school’s vision? Where do you feel your school falls short in implementing that vision?

#### Activity Discussion

##### *Rightboro Scenarios*

Follow the instructions in the [Rightboro Scenarios take-out package](#).

##### *Activity: Vision Research*

Take the time as a group to go through the forums and see if participants have posted anything that is particularly interesting. Don’t spend too much time on this, but if there are particular post titles that seem interesting or relevant, consider going over them together. Is there some education model you’ve never heard of? Is there something you’ve always wanted to know more about?

## Assignment Discussion

### Initial Action Plan, Part 1 - Someday: What Does Awesome Look Like?

- The first part of this assignment asks you to build from previous work. Have any of your learning circle members tried to address your problem of practice? Can they point you toward others in the school or organization who have? Can they point you toward outside resources? Have they discussed this problem of practice before, and do they have interesting insights or perspectives that you haven't heard? Consider taking time to gather data from the people in the room.
- Your learning circle could also use this time to help each other envision what your school or organization would look like if their problems of practice were solved. Ultimately, each learning circle member should spend time working on their personal vision, but this can be encouraged by a collective brainstorming from the group.
- Your group could also come to the meeting with their "Someday" already envisioned. Consider using this time to share with each other various members' visions for awesome. Celebrate the great things about their visions. Ask questions that encourage them to think more deeply. Think about the connections between each member's problems of practice and visions of success, and how members might help each other.

**Plus/Delta:** Spend the last five minutes sharing something positive about the meeting, and what learners hope to improve for the next meeting.

## After the Meeting

Send a short summary email to all members and a reminder about the next meeting.

### Email Template:

*Thank you for coming to the Unit 3a meeting of our Launching Innovation in Schools learning circle! In this meeting, we focused on \_\_ (include some description of the activities) \_\_\_\_\_. I thought it was particularly interesting that \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Between now and the next meeting, reach out to other stakeholders for your initiative and find out what "awesome" looks like to them in terms of your problem of practice. If you can, try reaching out to a student to hear their thoughts as well.*

The next meeting will be \_\_\_\_\_. We will focus on **Unit 3b: Getting to Work**. In this unit, we'll discuss the importance of taking action as soon as possible to start your initiative.

Hope to see you then!

## Unit 3b: Getting to Work

**Check-in:** Spend the first few minutes reviewing the previous meeting and any action taken since.

### Coursework

#### Video Discussion Questions

##### *Cycle of Experiment and Experience: Inner and Outer Loops*

- To discuss the Cycle of Experiment and Experience in the learning circle, project, hang or draw the cycle so that everyone can see it. Then brainstorm 1) Examples from your school for each point of the cycle and 2) Ways your school could be better. For example, perhaps teachers in your school love to experiment, but you feel like the experimentation remains isolated in certain classrooms. Use the following questions to guide your discussion.
  - How do teachers collaborate at your school? Are there formal times and spaces for them to share with each other? What has the administration done to facilitate this?
  - If there are teachers in the room, have them share some experiments they have done in the classroom. Ask them how they shared the experience with other teachers in the school.
  - Does your school learn from other schools? How?
  - Does your school have a shared instructional language? If someone were to visit your school, what words would you have to teach them? Do these words mean the same thing to all stakeholders? How were the words defined, and how were the definitions communicated?

##### *Sanborn Regional High School: Competency-Based Education*

- Vice Principal Ann Hadwen says, “The time to change was overdue” (6:33). Think of a recent large shift in practice that your school recently initiated. Who was excited to take it on? Who was hesitant, and why? How much support did teachers receive from the administration?
- Librarian Mark Giuliucci says, “At the very beginning, it was kind of the Wild West in a lot of classrooms” (0:22). What does change look like at your school or organization? Is it messy or chaotic? Do you feel like there is support for the sometimes chaotic nature of change?

### Dan Callahan: Facilitating Teacher-to-Teacher Learning

- Dan Callahan stresses the necessity of distributed leadership. Is leadership distributed throughout your school? How is distribution of power formally structured and does that structure reflect how things actually get done?
- What could be done to empower more teachers as you and others work towards instructional change?

## Assignment Discussion

### Initial Action Plan, Part 2 - Monday: Concrete Steps

- The Initial Action Plan requires that you take action. The people in the room can be considered accountability partners for each other. Have everyone in the room make a pledge to do one small step. That step could be setting up appointments with colleagues you'd like to work with or doing more research on your chosen initiative to prepare for a proposal. The step could even be changing something in your teaching practices or conducting a staff meeting in a different way. Encourage each other to make a pledge and hold each other accountable until the next meeting.
- Of the actions we ask you to describe in your Part 2 - Monday: Concrete Steps template, which steps are learning circle members most excited about? Which steps can you help each other with?

**Plus/Delta:** Spend the last five minutes sharing something positive about the meeting, and what learners hope to improve for the next meeting.

## After the Meeting

Send a short summary email to all members and a reminder about the next meeting.

### Email Template:

*Thank you for coming to the Unit 3b meeting of our Launching Innovation in Schools learning circle! In this meeting, we focused on \_\_ (include some description of the activities) \_\_\_\_\_. I thought it was particularly interesting that \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Between now and the next meeting, I encourage you to continue to make progress toward your change initiative and to hold each other accountable for taking a step or two. As you take steps, remember to annotate your template with what actually happened. Was the actual impact similar to what you predicted?*

The next meeting will be \_\_\_\_\_. We will focus on **Unit 4: Working Together Through Ups and Downs**. In this unit, we'll discuss the challenges of working collaboratively as well as tools and techniques to work through those difficulties.

Hope to see you then!



# Unit 4: Working Together Through Ups and Downs

**Check-in:** Spend the first few minutes reviewing the previous meeting and any action taken since. Have people made progress toward their Initial Action Plan? Were they able to complete some small step? Have each person share one thing that was exciting, one thing that was challenging, and one new thing they will do moving forward. Did any action taken result in a completely unexpected impact?

## Coursework

### Video Discussion Questions

#### *Mashpee Public Schools*

- Suzy Brooks says, “For [teachers] to take a risk or to experiment or put themselves out there... is not easy” (1:12). What kind of fears do you have as you embark on your change initiative? What kind of fears do you think other stakeholders will have?
- Amanda Hough talks about the importance of teachers’ modeling the skills students need to have in a changing world, including communication, sharing of ideas, and not being afraid to fail (3:49). What is another example of a 21st century skill?

#### *Working Collaboratively*

Think about the kinds of conversations you’ve had while trying to launch change. How do Peter’s tools for thinking about communication apply to your collaborative work with others?

#### *Edvestors: Improving Schools*

Janet Anderson and Marinell Rousmaniere from EdVestors describe what it looks like for a school to be “ready” to launch change. Do you feel like your school is ready for change? What can you do in your role to move your school toward readiness?

### Activity Discussion

#### *Left-Hand Column Case*

Follow the instructions in the [Left-Hand Column Case take-out package](#).

#### *Reflection Checkpoint*

This is a great opportunity to reflect with your learning circle about the progress members have made in this course. Check in with your problems of practice. After the work that you’ve done, would members still define their problems in the same way? Are there new assets that they’ve added to their asset map? Ask members what special things from the course, from work done outside of the course, or interactions with classmates have inspired them to move forward.

## Assignment Discussion

### Initial Action Plan

Continue working on your Initial Action Plan. Discuss the next steps, especially any that you want other members of the group to hold each other accountable for.

## Forums Discussion

By now, there should be a few participants who have posted parts of their Initial Action Plans in the forums. Your group might want to take the time to look through a few of these together and discuss what you see. Does anyone have a similar problem of practice? Can you learn from what others are doing?

**Plus/Delta:** Spend the last five minutes sharing something positive about the meeting, and what learners hope to improve for the next meeting.

## After the Meeting

Send a short summary email to all members and a reminder about the next meeting.

### Email Template:

*Thank you for coming to the Unit 4 meeting of our Launching Innovation in Schools learning circle! In this meeting, we focused on \_\_\_ (include some description of the activities) \_\_\_\_\_. I thought it was particularly interesting that\_\_\_\_\_.*

*Between now and the next meeting, try to think of ways that you can use Peter's tools to improve the quality of your conversations. Also, don't forget to continue your work on the Initial Action Plan and to take action!*

*The next meeting will be \_\_\_\_\_. We will focus on **Unit 5: Measuring Progress and Adjusting**. In this unit, we'll learn about why it's important to measure progress for an initiative and suggested ways to do it.*

*Hope to see you then!*

## Unit 5: Measuring Progress and Adjusting

**Check-in:** Spend the first few minutes reviewing the previous meeting and any action taken since. Have people made progress toward their Initial Action Plan? Were they able to complete some small step? Have each person share one thing that was exciting, one thing that was challenging, and one new thing they will do moving forward.

### Coursework

By now, you have done a significant amount of work, both in planning and taking initial steps toward change. You should use your learning circle members as resources for feedback. Feel free to use discussion time for the remaining weeks to share what you've done with each other and plan for the future.

As you share your steps, think about structuring your thoughts and discussion around these three questions:

1. What did I expect to happen?
2. What actually happened?
3. What are my thoughts and reflections?

### Video Discussion Questions

#### *Measuring Progress & Evaluation Scenarios*

Follow the instructions in the [Evaluation Scenarios take-out package](#).

#### *Blake Middle School: Assessing Pilots*

- Think about your change initiative. How might you pilot it effectively? Consider timing, group size, etc. How would you assess those pilots?
- Nat talks about the importance of going back to the “why” when looking at how to measure a project’s progress (3:24). Think about how to use your “why” to develop assessment benchmarks.

#### *Community Charter School of Cambridge: Improving Instruction Through Data*

- Vice Principal Becki Norris says: “[We] are finding ways to gather data on how students are doing ... and shepherding teachers through the process of identifying areas of weakness, so that they can re-teach those areas to students” (1:54). What kind of student data does your school collect? How does your school use that data? What kind of questions is your school asking?
- CCSC’s teaching evaluation system is coaching-oriented (6:56). How does your school evaluate teachers? How and how often do teachers reflect on their practice?

## Assignment Discussion

### *Initial Action Plan , Part 3: Assessment Plan*

If the learning circle is working on one problem of practice, are you in agreement on the best ways to track progress? How can you best capture subjective impressions? If each group member has a different problem of practice, get advice from group members on how to leverage different ways of collecting data and making adjustments.

## Forums Discussion

See what other participants are doing regarding measuring progress and adjusting. Discuss interesting ideas in the group.

**Plus/Delta:** Spend the last five minutes sharing something positive about the meeting, and what learners hope to improve for the next meeting.

## After the Meeting

Send a short summary email to all members and a reminder about the next meeting.

### Email Template:

*Thank you for coming to the Unit 5 meeting of our Launching Innovation in Schools learning circle! In this meeting, we focused on \_\_ (include some description of what happened) \_\_\_\_\_. I thought it was particularly interesting when \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Between now and the next meeting, continue to work on your Initial Action Plan. The next meeting will be \_\_\_\_\_. We will focus on **Unit 6: Sustaining Innovation in Schools**. This will be the last unit of the course. In this unit, we'll wrap things up by reflecting on our work and thinking toward the future. If possible, please have a draft of your Assignment 6 targeted artifact to bring to the next meeting.*

*Hope to see you then!*

# Unit 6: Sustaining Innovation in Schools

**Check-in:** Spend the first few minutes reviewing the previous meeting and any action taken since.

## Coursework

### Video Discussion Questions

#### *Masphee Public Schools: Sustaining Innovation*

Director of Instructional Technology Suzy Brooks says: “Teachers in Mashpee and myself included have evolved over the last year or so by becoming more reflective” (2:15). As you watch the video, ask yourself how you will introduce reflection into not just your change initiative but also your practice.

#### *Sustaining Innovation in Schools*

How will you bring what you’ve learned in this course to your school to make it more of a learning organization?

### Activity Discussion

#### *Make Your Resources Toolkit*

This is a great opportunity to go through the course together and discuss what you’ve learned.

#### *I Used To Think, But Now I Think*

Follow the instructions for the activity in the platform and share answers with group members. Look through the forums and see what fellow classmates wrote.

### Assignment Discussion

#### *Assignment 6: Final Deliverable*

- For this assignment we asked you to create a targeted artifact to share with a stakeholder in your initiative. We recommend that your members create their targeted artifact **before** this meeting so that members can use learning circle time to get feedback on their artifacts.
- Consider brainstorming ways for members to share their work with a larger audience. How might members share on social media, on school/organization/community newsletters or mailing lists, on blogs, etc. During previous runs of this course, several learners had the opportunity to present their work during faculty meetings. Does anyone in your learning circle want to take sharing their work to this next level?

**Plus/Delta:** Spend the last five minutes sharing something positive about the meeting, and what learners hope to improve for the next meeting.

## After the Meeting

While the Unit 6 meeting could be your final meeting, you might want to give your members some time to complete the final deliverable. We strongly recommend that you use the Unit 6 meeting to review one another's work and plan for a final meeting that is about presentations and plans for the future. You might even invite other colleagues to hear about what you've accomplished. Consider inviting key people from your Unit 2 Asset Map!

Send a short summary email to all members.

### Email Template:

*Thank you for coming to the Unit 6 meeting of our Launching Innovation in Schools learning circle! In this meeting, we focused on \_\_\_ (include some description of what happened) \_\_\_\_\_. I thought it was particularly interesting when \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Between now and the next meeting, continue to revise and polish your Final Deliverable. The next meeting will be \_\_\_\_\_. This will be our final meeting of the course where we will be presenting our work and considering the future. Reach out to anyone who might want to see what you have accomplished. I look forward to seeing everyone's final work!*

*Hope to see you then!*

# Final Meeting

**Check-in:** If there is anyone at this meeting to see presentations who has not taken this course, give a brief introduction to the course.

## Coursework

### ***Presentations***

Let this last meeting be about celebrating the work you've done in this course! Get some tasty snacks, pop the bubbly, and present your final assignments to each other.

### ***Future Work***

**Your work on your problem of practice should not end with this course!** Take time to reflect as a group about what the future will look like. Which steps from your Initial Action Plan will you expand on? How will you continue to engage others? How will you hold each other accountable for continuing the work that you started?

Consider the following accountability strategy:

- Have each member make a **6-month action plan** by asking themselves what actions they plan on taking 1 month from now, 3 months from now and 6 months from now. Then write these ideas down in the form of letters to your future self. Write down what progress you expect to have made, and what action step you plan to take. Write down something to encourage your future self to keep going.
- As the facilitator, collect these action plans. Mark the date in your calendar that is 1, 3, and 6 months away from the date of your meeting. On these days, plan to send out the letters to your learning circle members to remind them of the commitment they have made to themselves.

Are the non-learning circle members in the room interested in learning more about innovating in schools? Direct them to the [Launching Innovation in Schools](#) course which will be archived after the end date. They might also be interested in Justin Reich's other courses hosted on edX, which can be found at the [Teaching Systems Lab website](#).



## After the Meeting

Send a short goodbye email to all members.

### Email Template:

*I have really enjoyed taking this course with you. Throughout this course, I have learned \_\_\_\_\_, and I am excited to continue to grow as a leader. I challenge all of you not to let our change work end with this course, and I'm excited about the future of our work!*

*You can visit [tsl.mit.edu](https://tsl.mit.edu) to learn about new courses from the Teaching Systems Lab!*

*Thank you for all of your dedication and hard work, and good luck!*

# Appendix I: Social Media Templates

## Email

Dear Colleague,

I want to invite you to join a new, free online course for school leaders starting October 16th, [Launching Innovation in Schools](#). This self-paced course is taught by MIT assistant professor Justin Reich and senior lecturer Peter Senge, who have studied and supported innovation in education systems for many years.

You can [register now](#) and receive updates as the course gets started. Please circulate this email widely in your networks. Below is a short blurb about the course:

“Every great teacher and every great school constantly work towards creating better learning conditions for students. Just as we hope our students become lifelong learners, we as educators should be constantly learning and improving. This education course is for school leaders of all kinds (from teacher-leaders to principals to superintendents) who are launching innovation in schools—starting new efforts to work together to improve teaching and learning.

**See what former learner Douglas Kiang, a computer science teacher in Hawaii, has to say about his experience taking the course [here!](#)**

During the course, you and your classmates will complete a cycle of study, experimentation, and reflection to gain confidence and skills to lead instructional improvement efforts. Through experiential activities and assignments, you will begin working with colleagues to envision the next level of work for your team or organization, to launch a new initiative, and to measure your progress along the way. Based on the work of Justin Reich (Teaching Systems Lab, Comparative Media Studies, MIT) and Peter Senge (MIT Sloan), this course will focus on visioning and capacity-building, with an emphasis on collaboration and building partnerships with stakeholders at multiple levels.

At the end of the course, you will have started the process of launching an instructional improvement initiative in your school or learning environment, and you will better understand yourself as a leader and change agent. You will have made connections with peers who are also undertaking this important work.”

## Twitter

Join @bjfr & @petersenge for a free online course for school leaders: Launching Innovation in Schools. Starting soon! #liismooc

<https://www.edx.org/course/launching-innovation-schools-mitx-microsoft-education-11-154x-1>

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## LinkedIn

Join MIT assistant professor Justin Reich and senior lecturer Peter Senge for an online, self-paced course for school leaders: [Launching Innovation in Schools](#), starting soon. During the course, you will complete a cycle of study, experimentation, and reflection in leading instructional improvement efforts. Through experiential activities, you will begin working with colleagues to envision the next level of work for your organization, launch a new initiative, and measure your progress along the way. Registration is now open.

**See what former learner Douglas Kiang, a computer science teacher in Hawaii, has to say about his experience taking the course [here!](#)**

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## Facebook

Join MIT assistant professor Justin Reich and senior lecturer Peter Senge for an online course for school leaders: [Launching Innovation in Schools](#), starting soon.

**See what former learner Douglas Kiang, a computer science teacher in Hawaii, has to say about his experience taking the course here:**

**<https://youtu.be/BnH5tPurXUo>**

During the course, you and your classmates will complete a cycle of study, experimentation, and reflection to gain confidence and skills to lead instructional improvement efforts. Through experiential activities and assignments, you will begin working with colleagues to envision the next level of work for your team or organization, to launch a new initiative, and to measure your progress along the way.

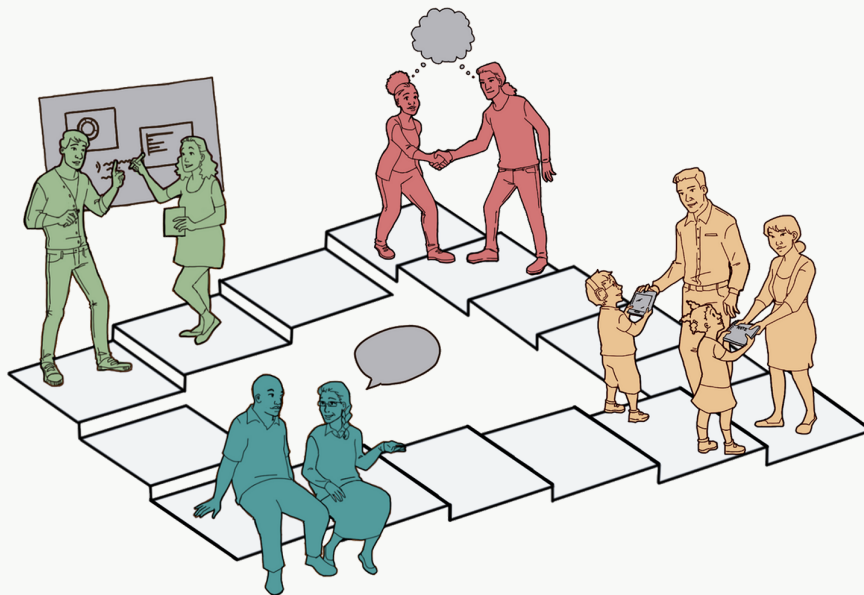
At the end of the course, you will have started the process of launching an instructional improvement initiative in your school or learning environment, and you will better understand yourself as a leader and change agent. You will have made connections with peers who are also undertaking this important work.

Register now to receive updates:

<https://www.edx.org/course/launching-innovation-schools-mitx-microsoft-education-11-154x-0>

# Launching Innovation in Schools

TAKE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD  
IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN  
YOUR SCHOOL!



Peter Senge



Justin Reich

In this course, you and your classmates will complete a cycle of **study, experimentation, and reflection** to gain the confidence and skills to lead instructional improvement efforts in schools. Based on the work of Justin Reich (Teaching Systems Lab and Comparative Media Studies, MIT) and Peter Senge (MIT Sloan), this course will focus on **visioning and capacity building, with an emphasis on collaboration and building partnerships with stakeholders at multiple levels.**

The course begins on edX

**February 4, 2020**

FIND OUT MORE AT

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/LIIS2020](https://tinyurl.com/liis2020)