

Week 1 | Getting Started - Part 1

This recipe card covers important introductions that should happen during your first meeting. Take about 10 minutes to give an overview of the Learning Circle process.

INTRODUCTION (10 MIN)

Start by introducing Learning Circles and the course you are facilitating. Then take some time to answer logistical questions from participants. Talking points are below.

INTRODUCING LEARNING CIRCLES

- Many universities and institutions have begun developing free, online courses as a way to increase access to education.
- These courses have very low completion rates, because taking a course alone, online, requires a lot of self-discipline, motivation, and prior knowledge of how online learning works.
- Learning Circles, developed by Chicago Public Library and Peer 2 Peer University, are an attempt to create a more engaging learning experiences using this free, online content, but doing it in-person!
- Learning Circles are free peer learning courses; a combination of a book club, study hall, and support group. Together we will try and help each other accomplish our learning goals.
- There are many ways to contribute. Some people might be more advanced technically, but other people might have unique insights that other people would not have noticed.

COURSE OVERVIEW AND LOGISTICS

- Discuss some of the specific themes of your course, what the learning goals are, what kind of work participants can expect to be doing.
- There are few prerequisites for taking this course: basic digital literacy, a desire to learn, and willingness to work together with your peers.
- We will meet at this time, for 90 minutes, for the next 6 weeks. Each week I will send you a reminder about our next meeting and a summary of what we did the week before.
- There is no necessary work outside of the Learning Circle, but as a group we can decide if we want to work on the course material outside of the weekly session. (The more work we do, the more progress we will make!)
- You can get a certificate if you complete the online course and/or attend 5 Learning Circles.
- My role as a facilitator is to support you in your learning. I am not a teacher or content expert.
- This is the most I'll ever be speaking at once during the Learning Circle. I have these cards which suggest activities and discussion points, but this is our space and we can choose to use it however we want.

QUESTIONS (10 MIN)

Open the floor to questions from participants.

The rest of this week's activities are outlined on the following card.

Week 1

Getting Started - Part 2

The goal for the rest of the session is to strike a balance between giving learners a chance to jump right into the course and taking time to create a comfortable space for the fledgling community. Both are important to the success of the Learning Circle.

GET TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER (10 MIN)

As the facilitator, it is important for you to prompt personal introductions in a way that will encourage conversation amongst the whole group. Frame this activity as a way for all of the participants to get to know one another, as a starting point for the work they'll be doing together over the next 6 weeks – this activity is for them, not for you.

- **First:** Ask learners to share why they came to the Learning Circle and an example of a good learning experience they have had in their life.
- **Next:** Model an introduction by re-introducing yourself to start.
- **Finally:** Afterwards, summarize the learning experiences and share how you think this Learning Circle can develop into an inclusive learning community.

COURSEWORK (45 MIN)

- Direct participants to the course website and have them create an account on the platform. Use platform guides on P2PU website as needed.
- Encourage learners to poke around on the platform, together or on their own.
- To wrap up, ask participants to come back together as a group and share with the broader group some of the things they learned or are excited to start learning about.

ACTIVITY: GROUP EXPECTATIONS (10 MIN)

Talk about expectations for the group to draw in participation from all group members and help craft group identity. It's okay if not everybody agrees on everything!

- **First:** Ask learners how they want to work with their peers in the coming weeks. Prompt learners with these questions:
 - Do you want to work through activities on a projector or work on their own?
 - Do you want to commit to doing work outside of the Learning Circle?
 - Do you feel like you have enough time to complete the course?
- **Next:** Based on the discussion create a list of expectations for their group and discuss the list, leaving room for last minute additions and any disagreements.
- **Finally:** Once the list is final, read the final list to the group.

PLUS/DELTA (5 MIN)

Ask learners to share one thing that went well for them today, and one thing that they would like to change for next week. You should record these weekly, as each subsequent Learning Circle will begin by revisiting the prior weeks plus/deltas. This activity is a great way to reflect on the course and constantly strive to improve the experience for learners. Make clear that the changes the participants mention will be revisited in the following class and integrated into the flow of the course.

FEEDBACK (AFTERWARDS)

Send a wrap up email to learners each week. Include your impressions of how it went, plus/delta feedback, and anything the group agreed to for next week.

If you are using our software, you can submit this via the [facilitator dashboard](#).

