



# Facilitator Orientation

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## ➤ Supporting Activities

# Welcome & Check-in

This facilitator training guide was developed by P2PU for the Empowering Detroit through Digital Literacy Collaborative Project to support the training of facilitators who can support learners learn digital skills and the application of those digital skills for their advancement. You can complete this training by yourself or in a group. When you finish, you will become a part of an international community of facilitators and you will be able to facilitate learning circles in any topic that you choose.

This facilitator training is just one part of the Empowering Detroit through Digital Literacy project. You can review the other Digital Literacy Training materials for this program included in the additional resources section of this guide.

If you are working through this guide with a group, introduce yourself to one another and share something that you learned recently. This is an important exercise to emphasize that everybody has things they want to learn, and knowledge and experiences that they can share. Together, a group of people can learn almost anything together.

For assistance using this guide or questions, you can reach our team at [thepeople@P2Pu.org](mailto:thepeople@P2Pu.org)

# Introduction to Learning Circles & P2PU

We believe effective learning is a social activity, every person develops expertise through their own life experiences, and that people learn best when they share and connect with others. In that spirit, we work with an open community of practice so our projects can be shaped by the people who are using them. This allows us to build education as a social good rather than a commodity. Representation and collaboration is crucial for building equitable access amongst learners.

**Peer 2 Peer  
University  
is a non-profit  
driven by 4  
core values:**



Peer Learning



Equity



Community



Open

## What are learning circles?



Learners and a  
facilitator meet...



in a public space  
like a library, or in a  
virtual space...



for regular meetings  
(2hr/week, 6-8 weeks)...



to learn about a  
topic together.

Learning circles are a free and responsive model of peer learning. Put simply, a learning circle is a facilitated group of people who meet regularly to learn about a topic together.

Facilitators are a crucial part of the learning circle methodology and the reason they're successful. The facilitator does not have to be an expert in the subject. It's

actually better that they're not! We designed learning circles so that with a little training and some practice, anybody can facilitate.

- Learning circles don't use the traditional teacher/student format in favor of peer-to-peer learning. A facilitator doesn't need to be an expert, just someone who wants to learn about the topic and is willing to keep things on track. With some training, anyone can be a facilitator!
- Most of our facilitators are library professionals running learning circles as public programming in their communities.
- Facilitation is designed to be low-cost and flexible meaning it can support changing community needs. This makes learning circles an effective model of responsive community-based education.

## Learning circle structure

### 1. Check in

First, there is a check-in to hear how everyone is doing, what they are working on today, and where they might need help.

### 2. Coursework

The heart of the learning circle is working through course materials. This can be done individually, in small groups, or all together gathered around a single computer or projector.

### 3. Activity

Often times a group activity can support peer learning and bridge the gap between the online course and real life.

### 4. Reflection

A planned closing space helps the group collectively consider what was covered during the meeting and provide feedback to guide their experience moving forward.

## Check-In

Starting and finishing each meeting as a group is a core component of learning circles. A consistent check-in warms up the group and is a reliable way to build community, recap previous sessions, and set expectations for the meeting.

A good check-in can:

- Create a space for everyone to speak or feel heard
- Encourage creativity and playfulness
- Shed light on common points of interest and experience
- Allow each participant to introduce themselves however they want
- Model group participation
- Introduce tools, topics or questions that both relate to the meeting and can be used to reflect upon at a later time or date

## Learning Formats (Coursework & Activity)

The way your learning circle progresses through the learning material can take many forms, varying based on different groups and topics: reading an article or a textbook chapter, watching lecture or tutorial videos, trying out interactive content, etc.

To support different learning styles, it's helpful to explore different types of learning formats. Sometimes these activity ideas come easily (e.g. if the topic is public speaking, learners can take turns sharing short monologues), and sometimes they require some creativity to effectively reinforce the goals of the module. We find that a mix of passive and active activities combining individual learning and group exploration allow for deeper understanding of the learning material. It also keeps things interesting!

## Reflection

A planned closing space helps the group collectively consider what was covered during the meeting and provide feedback to guide their experience moving

forward. As a baseline, we often recommend using a Plus/Delta: each participant shares a plus (something that went well) and a delta (something they'd like to change for the next meeting). These contributions can seed a brief conversation about ways to improve the next meeting.

A good reflection can:

- Create a space for everyone to give feedback
- Encourage participants to recognize and celebrate past learning
- Transition the group to work and life outside of the learning circle
- End the meeting on a positive and hopeful note

Learn more: [Meeting Structure - P2PU Knowledge Base](#)

## Get Started with Facilitation

### **What is a facilitator, and who can facilitate?**

A facilitator is responsible for organizing the learning circle, not teaching: the group should work together to understand the material.

Learning circles are facilitated, not taught, which means you don't need to be a teacher or a subject matter expert in order to successfully host a learning circle: The facilitator's role is to maintain the fidelity of the learning circle model (e.g. cultivating a supportive environment, keeping discussion on track, ending each meeting on time), but you're not responsible for what happens during each meeting.

All of the resources and methodologies referenced in our Knowledge Base—the weekly structure, the activities, the courses—have all been developed to help you lead a successful learning circle. That being said, facilitation can still feel daunting, especially at first.

The good news is that facilitation is a practice, and that you needn't stress about getting it "perfect" right away. Growing comfortable as a learning circle facilitator will be a continuous process of trying, reflecting, and iterating. And you needn't do this alone. The P2PU community is here to help -- our welcome committee, community forum, monthly facilitator calls, and weekly reflection prompts are each designed to help you refine your practice and grow confident and comfortable in the facilitator role.

What follows are some of the most common questions and worries we hear from facilitators, followed by specific strategies for addressing them.

Find more tips and strategies, visit [Facilitation Basics - Knowledge Base](#)

## Facilitator Tools

Facilitators can:

- Use a step by step dialog to guide them through creating a learning circle
- See who signed up, when meetings are scheduled, who can come, etc
- Send messages to learners
- Customize weekly reminders
- Capture feedback after a meeting to gather and share reflections
- Complete a survey on their experience facilitating a learning circle
- Generate a report at the end of the learning circle

Using P2PU tools is not required, but by using tools you have a system to collect information about your work that can be shared for reporting. You can also find resources and support from others in the community.

[Create an Account](#)



## Create an Account

or [log in](#) if you already have one!

Peer 2 Peer University is a grassroots network of people who believe that knowledge should be freely shared and learning is best done with others. Want to get involved? All you need is a free account to:



Run learning circles with free tools for planning meetings, messaging participants, and sharing your experience.



Join the P2PU forums and community events to connect with and get ideas from learning circle facilitators around the world.



Explore and add to a curated library of free courses vetted for learning circles, complete with community reviews and guides for facilitators.

### Start a Team

P2PU offers customized support for organizations interested in starting a networked learning circle program. [Learn more about P2PU Teams.](#)

First name \*

Last name \*

Email address \*

Password \*

Password confirmation \*

Enter the same password as before, for verification.

P2PU can contact me

Join our mailing list to learn about upcoming events, new courses, and news from the community. (Approximately six emails/year)

I consent to P2PU storing my data and accept the [terms of service](#) \*

P2PU values your privacy and will never sell your data.

This site is protected by reCAPTCHA and the Google [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#) apply.

CREATE MY ACCOUNT

Learners do not need a P2PU account in order to join a learning circle.

To facilitate or organize learning circles, you'll first need to create a P2PU account, which you can do from the P2PU homepage. After setting your password, you will be logged in and redirected to your learning circle dashboard.

The tools are hosted online and can be accessed from [www.p2pu.org](http://www.p2pu.org)

[Dashboard](#)

Welcome to your learning circle dashboard.


Join us for our Facilitator Call on Wed, Aug 3 to get support from other facilitators! We'll discuss the Science of Well-Being course + self-care in libraries.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

 Getting Started

 Using The Tools

 Help

 Meet With Q

 Teams Documentation

 Suggestion Board

### Member Learning Circles

Learning circle	Next meeting	
Critical Media Literacies	Aug 2, 2022	<a href="#">SIGNUP</a>
Marketing in a Digital World	Sep 6, 2022	<a href="#">SIGNUP</a>

### My Learning Circles

[Active & Upcoming](#) [Completed](#)

Learning circle	Venue	Signups	Next meeting	
Critical Media Literacies	Online	3	Aug 2, 2022	<a href="#">MANAGE</a>
[DRAFT] Music and the Brain	Online	0	Aug 19, 2022	<a href="#">MANAGE</a>

[Start a learning circle](#)

### Courses I've Added

Title	Provider	Date Added	
<a href="#">Leveraging Learning from Life</a>	College Unbound	Feb 16, 2022	<a href="#">EDIT</a>
<a href="#">[UNLISTED] Leveraging Learning from Life</a>	College Unbound	Jul 12, 2022	<a href="#">EDIT</a>
<a href="#">We Speak NYC</a>	We Speak NYC	Jan 5, 2022	<a href="#">EDIT</a>

[See all courses](#)

### My Team's Learning Circles

[Active & Upcoming](#) [Completed](#)

Learning circle	Venue	Facilitator	Signups	Next meeting
Critical Media Literacies	Online	Lydian	3	Aug 2, 2022
[DRAFT] Music and the Brain	Online	Lydian	0	Aug 19, 2022
Marketing in a Digital World	Online	Qumisha	4	Sep 6, 2022

### Latest Discussion

Topic	Category	Views
<a href="#">Scandinavian Film and Television (University of Copenhagen)</a>	Learning Resources	81
<a href="#">Revolutions of the Last Half Century (The Great Courses)</a>	Learning Resources	114
<a href="#">Abington Free Library's Digital Branch: Getting Started with eResources (Anna Kraynak)</a>	Learning Resources	567
<a href="#">Wer will das Online-Moderator*innen-Training mit uns machen?</a>	P2PU Deutschland	1165
<a href="#">ELL Learning Circle: USA Learns: English I Plus (Chicago Public Library - Albany Park Branch)</a>	Learning Resources	1474

[Go to the forum](#)

## Facilitator Dashboard

The Facilitator Dashboard is the space you see when you sign in to your P2PU account. From here, you can create and manage your learning circles and see what else is happening around the community.

### My Learning Circles

This section of your Dashboard shows the learning circles you are facilitating. One tab lists your Active & Upcoming learning circles, and a second tab lists your Completed learning circles. If you don't have any yet, click "Start a learning circle" to create one.

### Courses I've Added

As a facilitator, you can add online courses to the P2PU platform to use in a learning circle. This table shows the courses that you have added, along with a link to go to the course editing page for each one. Visit our website to [Add a Course](#).

### My Team's Learning Circles

This section shows all of the learning circles facilitated by members of your Team. See the dashboard: <https://learningcircles.p2pu.org/en/>

## Creating Learning Circles

P2PU offers a free system for creating and managing learning circle meetings. Once you've created a P2PU account and decided what learning circle you want to run, you can create your learning circle and publish it to the world.

### Walkthrough: How to Create a Learning Circle

Creating a learning circle is a 5-step process.

1. **Select a Course:** Identify the learning materials you'll be using
2. **Find a Location:** Share the details of where you'll be meeting (in person or online)

3. **Select Meeting Dates:** Choose the dates and times of your meetings (flexibly; you can update these later)
4. **Customize the Sign-Up Page:** Write any details about your learning circle (welcome message, materials needed, etc) to customize the public sign-up page
5. **Finalize:** Privately reflect on your goals for the learning circle and optionally ask for help if you need it.

BACK TO SEARCH

# How To Write Fiction

A P2PU LEARNING CIRCLE

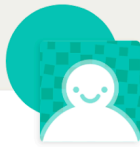


Facilitated by Lydian

Course materials provided by [Fiction Writers](#)

Taking place at Beagle Library, Room 504, Athens

This learning circle meets every Thursday from 6:30PM to 8PM EST starting December 9, 2021 for 6 weeks.



Facilitated by  
**Lydian**

Team **P2PU**

## Welcome!

We will be gathering at the tree that owns itself to contemplate its qualities as we write our own stories.

## Course materials we'll use

This is a course about writing fiction!

## Join this learning circle

What is a learning circle? [Read the FAQs.](#)

Name\*

Email address\*

If you'd like to receive weekly text messages reminding you of upcoming learning circle meetings, put your phone number here:

Ex. +1 281-234-5678. Your number won't be shared with other participants.

What do you hope to achieve by joining this learning circle?\*

A successful learning circle requires the support of all of its members. How will you help your peers achieve their goals?\*

I give consent that P2PU can share my signup info with the learning circle facilitator and send me info regarding the learning circle.\* For more information see our [privacy policy](#)

I would like to receive information about other learning opportunities in the future.

This site is protected by reCAPTCHA and the Google [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#) apply.

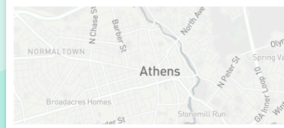
SUBMIT

## Meetings

- Dec. 9 at 6:30PM EST
- Dec. 16 at 6:30PM EST
- Dec. 23 at 6:30PM EST
- Dec. 30 at 6:30PM EST
- Jan. 6 at 6:30PM EST
- Jan. 13 at 6:30PM EST

## Location

Beagle Library, Room 504, Athens



Once you complete the creation process and publish your learning circle (either as a draft or a public circle), your sign-up page will automatically be generated (see above image for an example).

You'll receive a confirmation email, which includes the link to your sign-up page and a number of other resources. The P2PU Welcome Committee (a mix of P2PU staff and community members) will be copied on the email; if you asked for any help on Step 5, someone will reach out to ensure that your concerns are addressed before the learning circle begins.

## Management Page

### How To Write Fiction

Facilitated by Lydian  
Course materials provided by [Fiction Writers](#)  
Taking place at Beagle Library, Room 504, Athens  
This learning circle meets every Thursday from 6:30PM to 8PM EST starting December 9, 2021 for 6 weeks.

[EDIT](#) [VIEW](#) [ADD MEETING](#) [CLOSE SIGNUP](#) [DELETE](#)

Publish your learning circle

Meeting #1: Thursday, 9 Dec., 6:30PM ([edit](#), [delete](#))

Meeting #2: Thursday, 16 Dec., 6:30PM ([edit](#), [delete](#))

- Reminder will be sent Tuesday, 14 Dec., 6:30PM ([edit](#), [view](#))
- Review RSVPs
- Reflect and share feedback
- Send a meeting recap to participants

Meeting #3: Thursday, 23 Dec., 6:30PM ([edit](#), [delete](#))

Meeting #4: Thursday, 30 Dec., 6:30PM ([edit](#), [delete](#))

Meeting #5: Thursday, 6 Jan., 6:30PM ([edit](#), [delete](#))

Meeting #6: Thursday, 13 Jan., 6:30PM ([edit](#), [delete](#))

Wrap up

Learners (4)

Name	Contact	
becky	<becky@p2pu.org>	<a href="#">✎</a> <a href="#">🗑️</a> <a href="#">👤</a>
grif	<grif@p2pu.org>	<a href="#">✎</a> <a href="#">🗑️</a> <a href="#">👤</a>
q	<qumisha@p2pu.org>	<a href="#">✎</a> <a href="#">🗑️</a> <a href="#">👤</a>
dirk	<dirk@p2pu.org>	<a href="#">✎</a> <a href="#">🗑️</a> <a href="#">👤</a>

[ADD LEARNER](#)

Messages

Email subject	Status
How To Write Fiction learning circle meeting this Thursday, 9 Dec. at 6:30 p.m. EST	Sent at Wednesday, 8 Dec., 9:55AM
<a href="#">VIEW</a>	
How To Write Fiction learning circle meeting this Thursday, 16 Dec. at 6:30 p.m. EST	Will be sent Tuesday, 14 Dec., 6:30PM
<a href="#">EDIT</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>

The top section of the page shows a preview of the learning circle's information: title, image, facilitator info, link to the course materials, and meeting details.

Below that is a yellow bar containing the following tools:

- **Edit:** Return to the 5-step learning circle creation form to update any information previously entered.
- **View:** See the live learning circle sign-up page.
- **Add Meeting:** Quickly add a new meeting to the learning circle. This will add a section for that meeting on the management page and automatically generate an editable reminder message for that meeting.

- **Close Signup:** Turn off the registration form on the sign-up page. (If signup is closed, the button will change to Open Signup and can be used to activate registration again anytime.)
- **Delete:** Delete the learning circle from public view and remove the records of the learning circle and registered learners from the P2PU database.

The Add Learner button can be used to manually add participants to a learning circle. This only allows for adding a participant's name and contact information, not their answers to the sign-up questions. Note that this will automatically send a welcome message to the participant to let them know they've joined a learning circle.

To **add multiple learners** to your learning circle at the same time, click the "Add Learner" button and choose "Click here to add multiple learners at once." This feature is particularly useful for learning circles that use physical signup sheets for learners.

Meeting reminders are automatically generated when a meeting is created, either during the learning circle's initial creation or when added afterwards. These messages can be edited from the Messages table or in the individual meeting's section of the meeting manager.

Manual messages allow the facilitator to send out information to all registered learners at any time via email or SMS. These messages will be sent immediately and cannot be scheduled to go out in the future. Manual messages have P2PU branding on them, and they will CC the facilitator and BCC all other recipients.

## Choose a Learning Resource

Creating a learning circle with our tools can be very quick once you have gathered the information you need. For this program we will be using Tech Goes Home



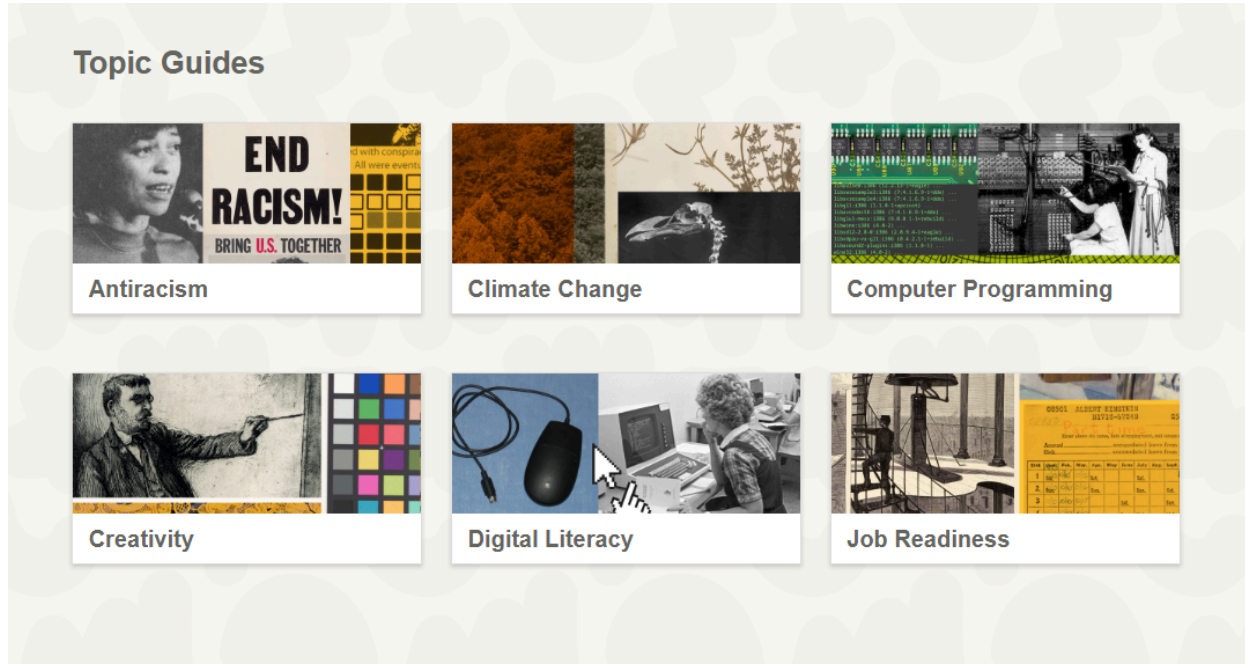
Curriculum as our course material. However we hope that you will want to use your new facilitation skills again so we have also compiled some tips on how to choose other learning resources.

Many facilitators use free online courses for subject material because they are designed in a linear format that is easily adaptable to group study. While these so-called MOOCs ("Massive open online courses") work quite well as the content basis for learning circles, there is a broad world of openly-available information that comes in all shapes and sizes. With some time and practice, nearly any learning resource can be adapted to the learning circle model, from YouTube playlists to books.

Regardless of where the content comes from, there is no such thing as a perfect course! No matter how well the content is arranged, a course will never know you as a person, help you make decisions, or tell you when you need to look for answers somewhere else. The learning circle format and the power of peer learning do a lot of work to create a great learning experience. At its best, a course is a starting point for a community of learners to reach a common goal, wherever that path may lead.

You can view and search through some learning materials here: [Learning Resources](#)

## Topic Guides



Our topic guides help facilitators choose courses related to popular topics, and they include helpful practices and additional readings suggested by our community.

You can browse them here: [Topic Guides](#)

## P2PU learning resource library

P2PU maintains a space where the learning circle community can collect and share open courses found from across the web. With a few exceptions, P2PU does not create or own this content—it is primarily a curated list. Materials added to this list are moderated and removed if they are duplicated, no longer available, or otherwise inappropriate for learning circles.

## Adding New Resources

Facilitators are not limited to the materials in the P2PU [learning resource library](#). Anybody with a P2PU account can add a learning resource to the P2PU library by filling out the "[Add a Resource](#)" form which asks for the following information:

- **Title**
- **Creator** (e.g. MIT, University of Michigan, Khan Academy)
- **Format** (the type of resource)
- **URL:** Where the resource (or information about the resource, such as a publisher's description of a book) can be accessed
- **Description** (Write 1-2 sentences describing what people will learn from this resource. This is what learners will see when signing up for learning circles, and what facilitators will see when selecting a resource.)
- **Topics** (Add your resource to one of P2PU's existing [topic guides](#).)
- **Keywords** (Select or create a few keywords that will help learners and future facilitators find this resource.)
- **Language**
- **License**

## [Facilitator Guides](#)

In some cases, other facilitators may have worked through a course and documented their process for working through the materials using a **facilitator guide**. New facilitators can benefit by using a facilitator guide, which includes the notes and session order of a previous facilitator. Facilitator guides can also be used as a way to document multiple resources that can be used for a learning circle instead of one online course.

You can choose any course that already has a guide by [viewing these search results](#).

# Learning Resources

Use these free online courses to facilitate a learning circle. If you can't find what you're looking for, you can [add new resources](#) yourself.

Showing 10 of 10 results

**Search**

Title, subject, etc

**P2PU resources**

Show all P2PU resources

Show Uganda resources only

**Order By**

Resource title

**Topics**

Select topic(s)

**Languages**

Select language(s)

English

**Facilitator guides**

Only show courses with facilitator guides

**OER mode**

Only show open educational resources

### Art of Storytelling

★★★★☆

17 RATINGS | USED IN 28 LEARNING CIRCLES

Explore the storytelling process at Pixar and gain insight on how to write stronger stories.

Creator: Khan Academy  
Format: Online Course  
Website: <https://www.khanacademy.org/computer>  
Topics: Communication  
Language: English

[MORE DETAILS](#)

[USE THIS COURSE](#)

### Essentials of Entrepreneurship: Thinking & Action

★★★★☆

7 RATINGS | USED IN 12 LEARNING CIRCLES

Success in business can be greatly enhanced with an understanding of key entrepreneurial characteristics and competencies solutions. This interactive course provides potential entrepreneurs with the

Creator: University of California Irvine  
Format: Online Course  
Website: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/entrepreneur-thinking>  
Topics: Business and Entrepreneurship  
Language: English

[MORE DETAILS](#)

[USE THIS COURSE](#)

To create your own facilitator guide, you can use our template: [★ P2PU Facilitator Guide Template](#)

For more tips on choosing a course, visit [Evaluating Courses - P2PU Knowledge Base](#)

## Gathering a Group

### Setting Intent

Learning circles work best when learners can identify what motivates their participation, and the same is true for the facilitator. As you begin thinking about the learning circles you want to run, here are some questions you can ask to set your intent:

- What are you personally hoping to achieve by facilitating a learning circle?
- What need are you trying to address in your community?
- Who do you expect to reach?
- How will you know if your experiment was a success?

Once you've established your personal goals for a learning circle, you'll want to start sharing your ideas and gathering buy-in from people who will help you along the way. This may include reaching out to people who you think might want to participate, organizations that might help you promote your learning circle, or a group that you are part of that can give you feedback on your idea. You are also, of course, welcome to reach out to P2PU at any time if you want our input!

## **Learning Circle Promo Kit**

Our Learning Circle Promo Kit contains flyer templates, icons, patterns, and tips for collaging images in Google Slides.

To create DIY Flyers, use our [Learning Circle Promo Kit](#)

## **Certificates & Accreditation**

P2PU does not officially issue any kind of accreditation or formal education certificates for participation in learning circles. Some courses offer various types of endorsement though learners often have to pay the course provider for a copy. A number of facilitators like to give certificates at the end of a learning circle to help promote a sense of achievement and stronger connection between the library/learning center and learner.

If you want to recognize and celebrate learners' achievements, you can use or customize our [certificate template](#).

## **Message Templates**

In addition to flyers and online promotion, you may want to reach out directly to your partners, neighbors, and constituents through email or social media. Below are some template messages you can use or modify to advertise your learning circle:

### **Internal email template**

*Got a mailing list for your organization? Here's a starting template for finding potential learners:*

Are you interested in learning about [topic] but don't want to study alone? Why not join our learning circle and study face-to-face with your peers?

From [date] to [date] we'll be meeting at [venue] to work together through a course on [subject] in a supportive, peer-based group. We won't have a teacher—we'll use the online course and our personal experiences to learn together.

There are no prerequisites for the course, but access to a laptop and some experience of using the internet would be helpful.

For more information, visit [link to website or sign-up page] or send an email to [email] for more information.

## Additional resources

- [Learning Resources](#)
- [Knowledge Base](#)
- [Dashboard](#)
- [Learning Circle Promo Kit](#)
- Tech Goes Home Digital Literacy Course Materials
  - [Introduction to Zoom](#)
  - [Introduction to Google Chrome and Search](#)
  - [Introduction to Gmail](#)
  - [Introduction to Chromebook](#)

Now that you've completed the training. You can create an account at P2PU.org, and start your own learning circle. If you are a project volunteer in Detroit you can join the team of facilitators currently running learning circles. To Join the team

email [thepeople@p2pu.org](mailto:thepeople@p2pu.org) let us know what library you work at and we can get you connected to the team. Once you join the team your learning circles will be posted on this website and you can join a larger network of facilitators working locally in Detroit and share best practices.

Happy Facilitating