

COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION:

THE WHY, WHAT, AND HOW

LEARNING CIRCLE FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



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Welcome to the Learning Circle

Facilitator's Guide

Competency-based education (CBE) offers potential pathways for transforming the school experience, but also has its own challenges. Reflecting on this approach will be richer if done with others who know and understand your context and can provide varied and valuable perspectives. We believe that your experience in **Competency-Based Education: The Why, What, and How** will be most powerful if you can take the course with others from your school or 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?

Diverse perspectives, experiences, and ideas can help lead to creative and innovative solutions. Ideally, your learning circle will be composed of colleagues from your school or organization so that you can work on common problems together in a common context. As you work through assignments, you'll be able to receive targeted feedback and support from people who know you and your specific context.

We have used learning circles in previous courses, and our learners found them to be a helpful part of their experience:



Head of Academic Technology at a PreK-9 school Megan Haddadi says,

"Learning circles [were] one of my favorite 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."



High school computer science teacher Douglas Kiang says,

"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."

These two former learning circle facilitators describe their learning experience in [this video](#).

What is the Learning Circle Facilitator's Guide?

We've created this guide to give you the tools you need to lead a learning circle. In this guide are suggested agendas, 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. 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 or you start assignments independently and use your time together to discuss your work.

The Learning Circle Facilitator's Guide has ideas and strategies for working collaboratively, including:

- Suggested agendas for meetings
- Questions to prompt discussions about course content
- Strategies for making assignments and activities more collaborative

Learning Circle Logistics

As the Course Starts (Before October 8, 2019)

As a facilitator, here are some things we recommend that you do before the course begins:

Gather your learners (learning circles work best with four to ten members).

- Consider inviting people to participate with an announcement during a staff meeting, emailing out invitations, or posting on social media. Directly reach out in-person or via email to individuals who you think might be interested.
- In [Appendix I](#) of this guide, we've offered some suggestions for how to communicate to your networks.

Answer key questions about logistics

We recommend you determine as many logistics as possible through email or other digital communication so that you can spend the first meeting of your course discussing content. As you and your learning circle answer these questions, try to be flexible.

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

Keep in mind that we've organized the material into four meetings; meetings 1-3 correspond with material from Units 0-3 in the course, while the final meeting is for reflection and sharing. To help you coordinate, we have provided a calendar with course dates and suggested assignment due dates in [Appendix II](#).

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

Ideally everyone in the learning circle should be registered for the course. However, we know that educators are incredibly busy, and not everyone in your learning circle will have time to do everything every week. **Not all learners have to commit to the same amount of work.** In this guide, we'll offer ways to engage learning circle members during meetings regardless of how much coursework they've done outside of the meeting. Make sure that members of your circle feel comfortable being as flexible as they need to be.

What resources will you need?

How will everyone see the course and Facilitator's Guide materials? Does the room have a projector? Will everyone use laptops/tablets/etc.? Will they have copies of this document, or will you make a slideshow with the meeting agenda? How will the room 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. What other supplies will you need? For example, some activities ask you to use sticky notes and markers. Will someone bring snacks?

Read through the Learning Circle Facilitator's Guide

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

Email Reminders

A few days before the start of the course, email out a reminder. Be sure to convey that you are grateful for everyone's time and excited to begin this course!

"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, former learning circle facilitator

During the Course (October 8 to November 19, 2019)

While this guide provides suggestions for how each learning circle meeting 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. **We encourage you to spend the bulk of your time doing activities together as a group or discussing your progress with assignments.** Doing these activities and assignments together will make them more collaborative and enriching. Choose the activities that seem most exciting and relevant for your learning circle. It's okay to get off-track from the suggested agenda if you are engaged in a productive discussion.

In general we've found that an hour typically leaves space for two to three discussions or activities. On the next page, we've provided a sample of what an agenda might look like given a one-hour meeting.

Sample Agenda

5 minutes	Welcome and Check-in	Spent the first few minutes reviewing the previous meeting and any action taken since the previous meeting.
10 minutes	Video Discussion	Begin video discussion 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.
15 minutes	Activity Discussion	We will suggest how you might engage your learning circle in course activities.
25 minutes	Assignment Work / Discussion	<p>We will provide guidelines for how to begin thinking about the assignments and how you might use your meeting to engage with the assignments as a group.</p> <p>If your learning circle has already completed assignments before the meeting, use this time to give each other feedback.</p>
5 minutes	Reflection and Closing	Spent the last five minutes sharing something positive about the meeting, and what learners hope to improve for the next meeting.

After each meeting, 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.**

Keep Notes

Because the activities and assignments in this course build off of each other, we recommend that you collect your learning circle's work in a central location such as Dropbox, Google Drive, Padlet, or another alternative. Openness and iteration are such a large part of why we think this process is important, so we encourage you to document the group's thinking throughout the process either by pictures, taking notes, or summarizing key activities.

Invite Others to Meetings

Anyone, regardless of whether they are taking the course, can participate in many of the activities in this guide. Feel free to invite your colleagues, students, or community members to a meeting of your learning circle! In [Appendix III](#), we have provided sample text for inviting non-learning circle members to attend your meetings. When non-learning circle members attend your meetings, consider how you can make them feel welcome, even though they aren't taking the course.

Share Out!

We want to hear from you! Find us Twitter with [#cbemooc](#) and [@MoocsTsl](#), and on [Facebook](#) to share how your experience in the learning circle is going. In past courses, learners have used the course hashtag to share photos of their learning circle at work, resources related to the course, thoughts on course content and more. Sharing out using social media will also allow people outside of the course to see the great work that you're doing!

Meeting 1: What is CBE? (related to Units 0 and 1)

Video Discussion Questions

We recommend spending around 15 minutes on video discussion. That could mean talking in-depth about a single video, or spending a shorter time on multiple videos. Focus on whichever video(s) you think will be most compelling to the group.

What is Competency-Based Education?

- If you have encountered competency-based education before, does the definition in the video seem to align with what you have heard or experienced?
- Justin explains that that the definition of a competency may vary. Can you think of another educational approach and/or innovation where there is great variation in how it is defined?

Why are Schools Excited about CBE?

- Equity is an important factor regarding why schools are interested in CBE. Are equitable outcomes something that's discussed at your school? If so, how is your school approaching them?
- Consider whether or not shared language around teaching and learning is a priority for your school or organization. If it is, how does your school or organization foster shared understanding?

In Conversation: Ethan Hutt on the Carnegie Unit

- Ethan describes how “there’s a sort of virtue in a little bit of ambiguity” (3:12) when it comes to teachers having discretion over their teaching and grading. In your school, what kind of discretion do teachers have over their classes and how they grade their students? What are the benefits and drawbacks of that level of discretion?
- In time-centric systems, some worry that student learning is inhibited by the amount of time allotted. In your experience, have you seen students struggling to learn due to time constraints? What were the consequences?

Activities & Assignments

Activity: Talk with Someone about Aspects of CBE

Members of your learning circle have had interesting and varied learning experiences. This activity is a chance to learn about some of those experiences and discuss how they may or may not relate to certain aspects of CBE. We think there's value in doing this activity as a group, even if individuals have already completed it in the platform.

Activity Continued

- In pairs, spend 5-10 minutes talking to each other about a learning experience or experiences you have had. Use the following questions as guides:
 - What was a learning experience, either formal or informal, where you:
 - had a very good understanding of the skills/knowledge you needed to acquire?
 - couldn't progress until you mastered something?
 - had some choice about when you would be assessed and maybe even how you would be assessed?
- As a whole group, spend 5-10 minutes sharing and debriefing about your conversations. Use the following debrief questions and prompts as a guide:
 - What types of learning experiences emerged? Did members discuss similar types of learning experiences?
 - What positive and/or negative feelings did members have about these learning experiences?
 - What, if any, learning experiences are similar to those that are currently offered in your school? What, if any, learning experiences are significantly different from those in your school? How so?

Activity: Examining Report Cards

Materials: One copy per person of the [two sample report cards](#) (either digital or physical)

This activity is a chance for learning circle participants to compare two different types of report cards and consider what each communicates in terms of student performance.

- In pairs, read or review the two sample report cards. One is an example of a competency-based report card, and the other is a traditional report card that is similar to the kind schools have been using in the United States for a while, though not everywhere. **Note:** We have created these examples to work for this activity and have made them less complex than they would be in real life.
- With your partner, discuss the two report cards using the following questions as a guide. Feel free to add any other observations.
 - What does each report card tell you about the student's performance? What does each report card NOT tell you?
 - List a few pros and cons of each type of report card.
- As a group, share highlights from the pair conversations.

Assignment 1: Preparation for Creating Your Artifact

(Suggested due date: October 21, 2019)

Materials: sticky notes, pens/pencils/markers

Throughout the course, learners will work on an artifact that supports a CBE-related conversation. Learning circle members may choose to work individually, or may choose to work together planning a single conversation with a chosen stakeholder.

- As a group, **spend 5 minutes discussing where your school or organization is regarding CBE at the moment.** Have people heard of it? Have there already been some experiments? You may learn something new about your school or organization and CBE from other members of your learning circle.
- Still with the group, spend 10 minutes brainstorming on the following:
 - **What type of conversation do you want to have and what kind of stakeholder(s) do you want to target?** For example: Do you want to have a serious talk with your assistant principal about doing a CBE-style experiment in your classroom? An informal chat with a co-worker about whether or not to do some CBE-related professional development this summer?
 - **In terms of this conversation, what might your goals be?** As you're discussing, provide feedback and encouragement about what you're hearing. It's OK to not to have finalized your goal; you'll be thinking about it further later.
- While discussing the goals and type of conversation, it may have become clear that group members are interested in having similar types of conversations and working together. If so, take an extra 5 minutes to narrow down a list of potential stakeholders as a group. We recommend picking your stakeholder before the next learning circle meeting.
 - **Need some help determining a shared goal for the conversation?**
 - * Individually, have group members brainstorm goals and (legibly) write their thoughts on sticky notes, with one answer per sticky note.
 - * Next, group members should place their goals on a wall in the room. Have a group member read or summarize the possible goals. Then, collectively, group sticky notes with similar themes together.
 - * Discuss the various proposed goals. Are there a lot of similar goals, or many different ones?
 - * Eliminate any goals that seem unrealistic given your context, time constraints, etc. Example: In this one conversation, plan an entire school-wide CBE implementation.
 - * Pick a goal from the grouped/themed goals.

Meeting 2: CBE and Your Context (related to Units 1 and 2)

Video Discussion Questions

Montpelier, Crosstown, and Noble Instruction Videos

Now that you've met the featured schools, Montpelier High School, Crosstown High, and Noble High School, and seen what competency-based education looks like in their classrooms, take some time to reflect about them as a group. Pick at least one of the questions, and compare and contrast the three schools. Feel free to offer any additional thoughts about the schools during the conversation.

- What parts of CBE implementation in these schools are especially compelling to you considering your context? What seems exciting to you?
- When you consider these schools' experiences, are there things you notice, perhaps characteristics of the school or staff, that seem to be helpful for experimenting with CBE and/or educational innovation in general?
- What CBE-related challenges did you learn about that seemed most relevant to you and your context?

Here's a quick reminder about which school is which:

- **Montpelier High School** is a public school with approximately 350 students in a small town in Vermont. They made significant changes to their schedule (8 marking periods) and grading system when they implemented proficiency-based learning.
- **Crosstown High** is a new, urban charter school in Tennessee that opened with approximately 150 ninth grade students. It has a strong focus on project-based learning, in addition to being competency-based. Some classes are team taught to facilitate interdisciplinary learning.
- **Noble High School** is a public school with approximately 1,000 students in rural Maine. They have heterogeneous class groupings, where students of all abilities take classes together. When they adopted proficiency-based learning, they decided to continue using letter grades, but to rethink other aspects of assessment, like retakes.

Activities & Assignments

Activity: Understood Betsy

Materials: print or digital copy of [“What Grade is Betsy?” excerpt](#)

- Have someone in your group summarize the “What Grade is Betsy?” excerpt from Understood Betsy by Dorothy Canfield Fisher. If group members have not read the excerpt yet, spend a few minutes reading or reviewing it together.
- In small groups, share thoughts and reflections on the educational methods used in the excerpt. Some suggestions for discussion questions:
 - How do the educational methods in “Understood Betsy” compare to what you experienced as a student? How do they compare with what your students experience?
 - What do you see as a few benefits and/or drawbacks of a school educating its students this way?
- As a group, come back together to share highlights from your small group discussion and explore the connection between Betsy’s classroom and what you’ve learned about CBE.
 - Sometimes experimentation in the past can look similar to the “innovations” of today. Based on the definitions you’ve seen in this course, to what extent would you consider Betsy’s experience to be competency-based education?

Activity: CBE Readiness

Materials: print or digital copy of [What Do Districts Think About When Implementing CBE?](#) (Education Elements, 2017)

Divide into pairs and make sure each pair has a copy of the document “What Do Districts Think About When Implementing CBE?”.

- Each pair will choose a column to focus on. Remember that this document has two pages.
- Take some time to read your chosen column, and then discuss with your partner:
 - Anything new you’ve learned about CBE from this document.
 - Do any of the components you examined seem well developed in your context?
 - Do any of the components seem especially difficult or untenable considering your context?
 - Do any of the components seem exciting or aspirational? Are there components that seem like realistic possibilities for your school?
- As a group, discuss the columns that your pair chose. Share one thing from that list you thought could be especially difficult given your context, and one thing you thought could be particularly exciting.

Activity: Further Reflection on Your Context and CBE

Materials: sticky notes, pens/pencils/markers

In Assignment 1, you considered where your school is regarding CBE. You may have continued that thinking in Activity: CBE Readiness. In Assignment 2, you'll think about why your stakeholder should care about considering CBE. This activity will help you and the other learning circle members have a more in-depth conversation about how CBE might—or might not—align with your context.

- Write/display each of the following bolded questions on a flat surface visible to everyone:
 - **What are some of the signature strengths of our school?** Think about the things that everyone (parents, students, and faculty) is most proud of, that get your heart beating a little bit faster, and that get you smiling.
 - **What learning outcomes are most important for our students?** When you think about the skills, knowledge, and character qualities of graduates from your district, what are the qualities that you most care about?
 - **What major initiatives are going on in our school right now?** If asked “What are you working on? What are you trying to improve?” what would teachers and administrators say?
- Have group members independently brainstorm answers to the questions and (legibly) write their thoughts on sticky notes, with one answer per sticky note.
- Next, group members should place their answers underneath the questions. Have a group member read or summarize the answers. Then, collectively, group sticky notes with similar themes together under each question. Are there a lot of common themes, or many different ones?
- As a group, discuss how CBE may fit in with all of this:
 - Based on what you've discussed, are there parts of CBE that fit in well with the strengths, goals, and initiatives in your district? How so?
 - Are there aspects that are not an easy fit? Why?
 - Is there agreement among the group?
- At the end of the discussion, have someone take pictures of the sticky notes to send to learning circle members, or take a moment to write down notes from the conversation.

Assignment 2: Create an Artifact to Prompt a Conversation Around CBE (First Draft) (Suggested due date: November 4, 2019)

In Assignment 2, you'll create your artifact in the format that is most useful considering your context. Whether learning circle members are each making one communal artifact or individual separate ones, start the meeting by discussing format. Maybe your school really likes memos. Maybe you think a quick slide presentation or even a quick video would be most effective. Members can share formats they think would be helpful and discuss pros and cons.

Revisit the following from Unit 1:

- **Finalize the goal of the conversation:** Examples: In a faculty meeting, share challenges other schools have experienced as they've implemented competency-based education that could be particularly relevant for our school. OR Explain to the innovation team why experimenting with competency-based education right now doesn't align with a key new initiative.
- **Where your school or organization is now regarding CBE:** update if needed.

If learning circle members are creating their own artifacts:

Materials: pens/pencils/markers

If learning circle members have already created first drafts, skip to the next step. If not:

- Ask learning circle members to write down thoughts in response to the following:
 - **A rationale for why your stakeholder should care.** If your learning circle did Activity: Further Reflection, you will already be thinking about how CBE aligns (or doesn't) with your context.
 - **A potential positive aspect of CBE** that you think is especially important for your stakeholder to know about considering your context.
 - **A potential challenging aspect of CBE** (or objection to CBE) that you think is especially important for your stakeholder to know about considering your context.
- In pairs, trade notes or, if relevant, artifact first drafts. Take a few moments to review your partner's work and then give each other feedback.
 - If learning circle members are looking at notes in response to the prompts: Is there anything you don't understand? Consider asking constructive questions to find out more about your partner's thinking.
 - If learning circles members are looking at first drafts, pay special attention to the items listed above (rationale for why the stakeholder should care, potential positive aspect, potential challenging aspect). Also consider the draft holistically.

If learning circle members are creating a single artifact as a group:

Materials: sticky notes, pens/pencils/markers

- Write or show each of the prompts on a flat surface visible to everyone.

What is a...

- **rationale for why your stakeholder should care.** If your learning circle did Activity: Further Reflection, you will already be thinking about how CBE aligns (or doesn't) with your context.
 - **potential positive aspect of CBE** that you think is especially important for your stakeholder to know about considering your context.
 - **potential challenging aspect of CBE** (or objection to CBE) that you think is especially important for your stakeholder to know about considering your context.
- Individually, have group members brainstorm responses and (legibly) write their thoughts on sticky notes, with one answer per sticky note.
 - Put the responses underneath the corresponding category. Have a group member read or summarize the sticky notes. Then, collectively, group sticky notes with similar themes together under each question. Are there a lot of common themes, or many different ones? As a group, discuss the grouped responses for as many questions as time allows:
 - Consider the conversation you plan to have around CBE. Are there responses that are particularly aligned with the goal for your conversation? Are there responses that are outside the scope of this conversation?
 - Are there responses that seem especially important or relevant for your context?
 - Are there any responses that the group agrees should not be included in your artifact?
 - At the end of the discussion, have someone take pictures of the sticky notes to send to learning circle members, or take a moment to write down notes from the conversation so you can use these notes when finalizing the first draft of the artifact.
 - Make a plan about how the the first draft of your artifact will be finalized.
 - If possible, get feedback from someone outside the learning circle on the first draft of the artifact. Think about what kind of feedback you're interested in, and generate one or two questions that will help you gather it. Possible questions might include:
 - Do you find any particular element of this artifact especially important or relevant to our school or community?
 - Is there anything you feel is confusing or hard to understand?

Meeting 3: Considering CBE Systems (related to Unit 3)

Video Discussion Questions

Montpelier High School: Spotlight on Principal Advisory Board

- Former Principal Mike McRaith acknowledges the importance of student voice in shaping his school's implementation of CBE. How does your school solicit student input and how have students been involved in shaping new initiatives?

Crosstown High: Spotlight on Professional Development

- It takes a great deal of time and effort to implement a new system, including a competency-based system, and Angela Stepancic reminds us that professional development is key. How is professional development time used at your school or organization? How could your school create more time for teachers to share, plan, and learn?

Noble High School: Spotlight on Knight Time

- Knight Time is an example of a very intentional student support strategy where both students and teachers often have choices in terms of how they use a specific block of time. In your school or organization, how have people been supported or received guidance in using open time or flex time productively?

Activities & Assignments

Activity: Incorporating Stakeholder Voices

Materials: board and writing implements (chalk, white board markers), or computer and projector

In planning any kind of school experiment or change, communication is key. CBE is no exception. To help think through this aspect of school change, you'll be putting yourself in the role of someone beginning to implement CBE and thinking about how you would incorporate stakeholder feedback and communication into your plan. **Note:** You don't actually have to plan a specific experiment around CBE to do this activity.

- As a group, decide if you want to imagine a scenario where you're all administrators in a school (perhaps your school) that is beginning to implement CBE **OR** choose an administrator at one of the featured schools and consider what it was like at the beginning of their implementation process.

Activity Continued

- As a reminder, the administrators at the featured schools:
 - **Mike McRaith, Former Principal at Montpelier High School**
 - **Chandra Sledge Mathias, Former Principal at Crosstown High**
 - **Alison Kearney, Assistant Principal at Noble High School**
- Discuss potential stakeholders in the scenario you chose (teachers, students, families, even business leaders and politicians) and choose one to focus on for this activity.
- To help think through this aspect of school change, you'll be putting yourself in the role of someone beginning to implement CBE and thinking about how you would incorporate stakeholder feedback and communication into your plan. Then, share concerns you think the stakeholder may have about CBE (don't forget emotional concerns like stress, lack of time, grades, etc.). Ask one member to jot down these ways to share and concerns in a place where everyone can see, like a Google Doc or on a whiteboard. You can use [this template](#) which you can access in Google doc and [pdf format](#). To get a version of the Google doc template you can edit, click "File" and then select either "Download as" or "Make a Copy..."
- Next, discuss various ways you might communicate to the stakeholder to address their concerns. Think both about what you want to say and how you want to convey it (community meeting, letter/memo, workshop, social media, etc.). It's fine if these ideas are broad; you're not drafting the communication itself.
- Finally, discuss how it felt taking on the role of an administrator and considering stakeholder concerns.

Activity: Key Resource List

Materials: Each member or small group will need access to the course during the meeting (i.e. tablet, laptops, internet, etc.).

- As a learning circle, discuss the resources you've viewed so far in the platform, such as videos, readings, websites, definitions of CBE, materials from featured schools, readiness tools, etc. Which ones have been the most helpful to you, or could be helpful in the future? Create a short list of these helpful resources. For each resource, make some notes about why you think it is especially helpful.
- Optional: Write an email to a colleague (or colleagues) at your school or organization who you think would be interested in these resources, and include a sentence or two about why you think they'd be interested in each one.

Assignment 3: Refine Your Artifact (Draft 2) (Suggested due date: November 16, 2019)

Materials: group members' current version of their artifact (paper or electronic copy)

For Assignment 3, remember that members should be adding a resource and other elements to their artifact draft. If it's helpful, members can discuss which elements seem most helpful to add:

Assignment Continued

- Brief Definition/Description of what CBE is, including the things you think are most important considering your context. Feel free to use your own words or share an existing definition.
- Next Steps/Something To Try. Some examples: one thing I wish we could try as a school, one thing I plan to try tomorrow, some next steps to move this idea forward, a conversation with someone I'd like to have in the future.
- Strengths: one aspect of our school or organization's culture or structures that will enable growth and change.
- Personal reflection on aspects of CBE - why do I care about CBE?
- An aspect of CBE you're still curious about and why
- Anything else that you think should be included. Don't forget to look at peer feedback from Draft 1!

If learning circle members are creating individual artifacts:

- Share the most current draft of your artifact with someone other than the person you partnered with in the last meeting. Possible questions might include: Do you find any particular aspect of this artifact important or relevant for our school community? Is there anything you feel is confusing or hard to understand?
- Provide constructive feedback on your partner's artifact in a similar manner.
- Take a moment to write down notes about what you would like to change for the next draft of your artifact, or how you plan to incorporate your partner's feedback.
- If need be, learning circle members can take time during the meeting to refine a draft. This could mean working on how the artifact looks.

If learning circle members are collaboratively creating a single artifact:

Iterate

- Review any feedback on the first draft of the artifact (could be from the forums or from someone outside the group) and make a second draft (or polish it depending on timing).

Design

- Refine the visual presentation of the artifact. How might you use images, layout, etc. to help convey your messages to your stakeholder?

Share

- Plan next steps for sharing your artifact with your stakeholder. If you are sharing it with an individual, would it help to send them your artifact ahead of time? If you plan to present your artifact at an upcoming faculty meeting, what do you need to do to get on the schedule?

Meeting 4: Celebrating & Looking Ahead

This last meeting is about celebrating and reflecting on the work you've done and planning for the future. Consider inviting others to see the work that you've been doing.

Activity

I used to think, but now I think...

- In pairs, discuss how your own thinking about CBE has changed throughout the course. What did you think about CBE before the course began? What do you think of it now? What caused a shift in your thinking?
- As a group, share highlights from the pair conversations.

Presentations

- If learning circle members worked on their artifacts individually, have them present their second drafts to the group. If the conversation with their stakeholder has already happened, share how it went and what feedback they received.
- If learning circle members worked on their artifacts collaboratively and you have invited people outside of your learning circle to this meeting, give a brief informal presentation about your work in the course and your artifact.

Future Work

This doesn't have to be the end of your conversation about school change and teaching and learning in your context. Whether or not group members decide to experiment with CBE specifically, consider:

- What are next steps for the group and for individuals in the room? Is anyone planning to try an experiment based on what they learned in this course? What will that be and how can members of the group be ongoing resources to each other?
- Who will be driving these next steps forward?

Celebrate!

Congratulate and thank everyone in the room for their participation and contribution. Reflect on your work in the learning circle.

Appendix I: Social Media Templates

Feel free to use these social media and email templates to share information about the course with your colleagues and to invite them to join a learning circle. Consider sharing this information widely. You may be surprised who is interested in joining in this shared learning experience.

TWITTER

Join [@bjfr](#) at [@MoocsTsl](#) for a free online course for educators: Competency-Based Education: The Why, What, and How. Starts October 8! [#CBEMOOC](#)
<https://www.edx.org/course/competency-based-education-the-why-what-and-how>

FACEBOOK/LINKEDIN

Join Director of MIT Teaching Systems Lab Dr. Justin Reich starting October 8, 2019 in a free, online course for educators: Competency-Based Learning: The Why, What, and How.

This free online course is for anyone interested in learning more about competency-based education (CBE), from educators to parents to policy-makers. Over the six weeks of this course, you and your peers will hear from educators about why so many schools are excited about CBE, its potential to close opportunity gaps, as well as challenges and concerns. You will leave able to articulate what, if any, lessons CBE has for your context.

To receive updates as we get ready to launch, register here:
<https://www.edx.org/course/competency-based-education-the-why-what-and-how>

EMAIL

Dear Colleague,

I want to invite you to join a new free online course for school leaders starting October 8, 2019, Competency-Based Thinking: The Why, What, and How. The course is taught by Director of the MIT Teaching Systems Lab, Dr. Justin Reich, who has supported and studied innovation in education systems for many years.

You can [register now](#) and receive updates as the course gets started. Below is a short blurb about the course.

I would also like to invite you to be part of my learning circle for this course. A learning circle is a peer-facilitated, face-to-face study group for learners who are all ideally registered in the course. As a learning circle, we will discuss course videos and support each other's assignment work.

*email continued***Course blurb:**

Many schools across the country are exploring competency-based education (CBE) as a pathway for transforming the school experience. In this course, instructor Justin Reich and the MIT Teaching Systems Lab team will help you develop an understanding of the characteristic elements of CBE and how schools are implementing it.

You will learn why so many educators are excited about CBE and its potential for closing opportunity gaps, as well as challenges and concerns. You will get a closer look at what the implementation of CBE looks and feels like for students, teachers, administrators, families, and community members. You will consider the kinds of system-wide shifts necessary to support this innovation in education.

By looking at research and hearing from experts and voices in schools, you will leave the course equipped to start or continue conversations about whether CBE is a good fit in your context.

Appendix II: Course Calendar

Here is a list of important dates to remember:

- **Unit 0: Welcome & What is CBE?** - available October 8, 2019
- **Unit 1: Why CBE?** - available October 8, 2019
- **Assignment 1 Suggested Due Date:** October 21, 2019
- **Unit 2: CBE in the Classroom** - available October 22, 2019
- **Assignment 2 Suggested Due Date:** November 4, 2019
- **Certificate Upgrade Deadline:** November 9, 2019
- **Unit 3: Considering CBE Systems** - available November 5, 2019
- **Assignment 3 Suggested Due Date:** November 16, 2019
- **Course Ends:** November 19, 2019 11:30 PM UTC

Appendix III: Inviting Non-Learning Circle Members to Meetings

Here is sample text for messaging anyone who you think might want to visit a learning circle.

Dear _____,

I have been taking an online course about exploring competency-based education (CBE) as a pathway for learning more about transforming the school experience. I am taking this course in a learning circle, which is a group of registered learners who meet in person to discuss the course content and support each other.

I would like to invite you to join our next learning circle meeting on **[Insert Date]**, 2019

You do not have to register for the course or review course content in order to join our discussion. We would love for you to contribute your perspective based on your own experiences. However, if you would like to learn more about the course, visit the [Competency-Based Education: The Why, What, and How edX page](#), the [Facebook page](#), or the [Teaching Systems Lab Twitter page](#), and follow [#CBEMOOC](#). You might even consider enrolling to look over some of the course content.

I hope to see you at our next meeting!