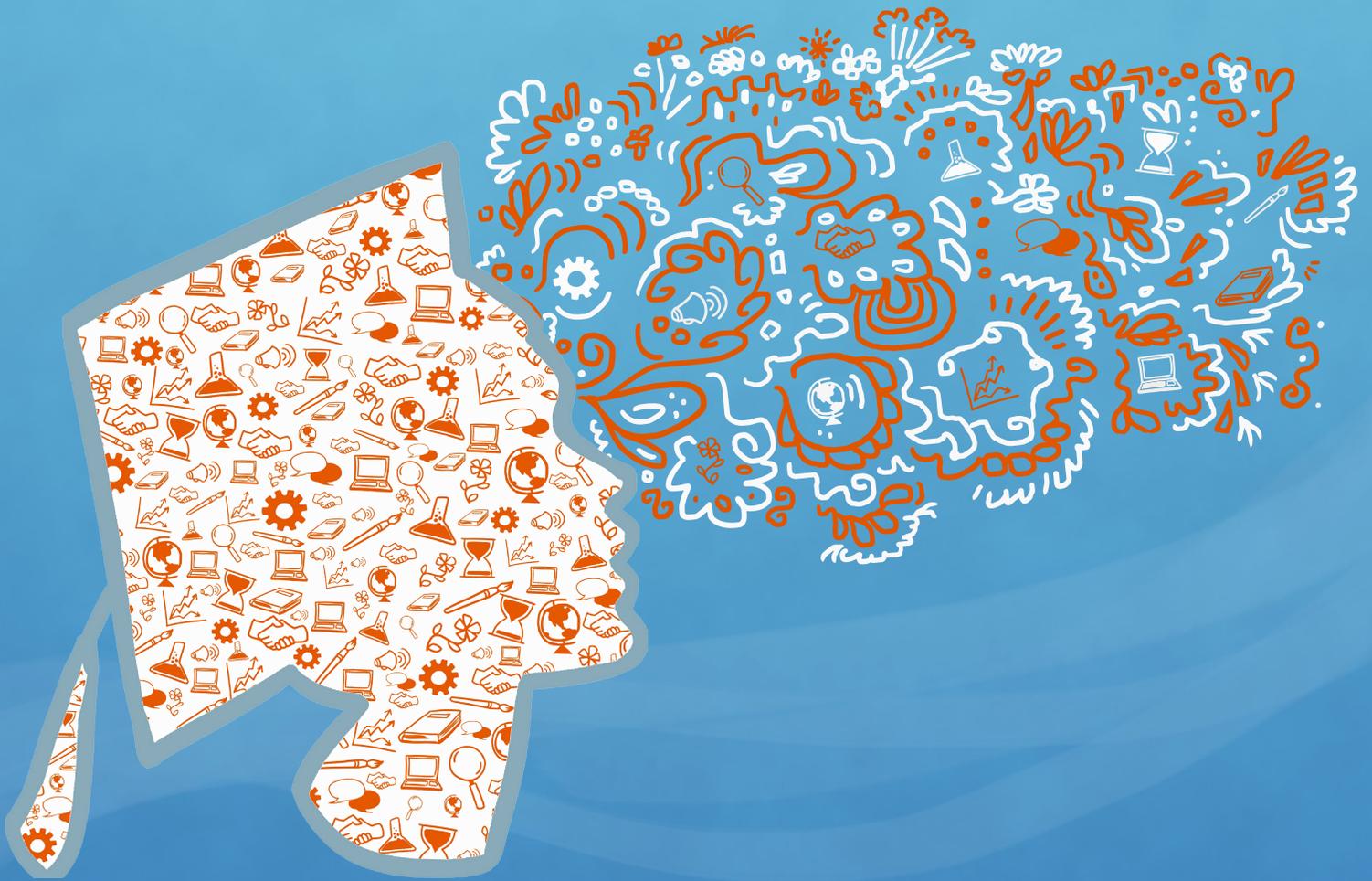# Envisioning the Graduate of the Future

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Table of Contents

Welcome to the Facilitator's Guide

Envisioning the Graduate of the Future asks you to reflect on large, important questions about the purpose of high school and expectations for graduates. This reflection is best done with others who know and understand your context and can provide varied and valuable perspectives. We believe that your experience in Envisioning the Graduate of the Future will be most powerful if you can take the course with others from your school or community 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?

No one knows your school or context better than the people from there, and asking your colleagues to join you in taking this course is one step toward sparking further exploration on the purpose of high school.

Diverse perspectives, experiences, and ideas from all across a school and community are needed to create a reflective and representative graduate profile. Taking this course with a learning circle allows you to begin the work of engaging others in conversations around expectations for graduates as soon as possible. As you work through assignments, you'll receive targeted feedback and support from people who know you and your specific context. And finally, we hope your learning circle can become a resource as you continue the graduate profile process after the course officially ends.

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 facilitators describe their learning experience in this video.

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

- Text for getting and keeping participants organized
- Suggested schedules for meetings throughout the course and suggested agenda for those meetings
- Questions to prompt discussions about course content
- Strategies for making assignments and activities more collaborative

Learning Circle Logistics

As the Course Starts (Before May 2, 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 4 to 10 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, as well as the course flyer.

Answer logistics questions

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?

Do you plan to meet every week? When do you want to meet relative to assignment work periods? To help you coordinate, we have provided a calendar with course dates and assignment work periods in Appendix III.

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, 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 materials? Does the room have a projector? Will everyone use laptops/tablets/etc.? How will the table(s) 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 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 (May 2 to May 30, 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 the assignments.** 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.

On the next page, we've provided a sample of what an agenda might look like given a one-hour meeting.

Sample Agenda

5 mins.	**Welcome and Check-in**	Spend the first few minutes reviewing the previous meeting and any action taken since the previous meeting.
10 mins.	**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 mins.	**Activity Discussion**	We will suggest how you might engage your learning circle in course activities.
25 mins.	**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.
5 mins.	**Plus/Delta with Reflection**	Spend 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 is 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

We believe that the process of creating a vision of a graduate should be collaborative and open to as many perspectives as possible, not just those who are taking the course with you. 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 II, we have provided sample text and a flyer 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! Use **#FutureGradsMOOC** or tag us **@MoocsTsl** on Twitter and visit our Facebook page **@FutureGradsMooc** 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!

Meetings Schedule

Envisioning the Graduate of the Future is a short course designed to be quick and inspirational. The course has three assignments, each with a suggested range of dates to work on it called a "work period." **We suggest that your learning circle meet once during each of the work periods, and once more at the end of the course.** However, feel free to meet more or fewer times depending on your learning circles needs!

This guide will offer suggestions for how to structure these meetings based on three main concepts of the course: **Reflecting on High School**, **Introduction to the Graduate Profile**, and the **Graduate Profile Process**. We hope that you find our suggestions helpful, but we also encourage you to be flexible. For example, we suggest that you discuss the video Shrewsbury Public Schools: Engaging Multiple Perspectives in the second meeting, but if it works better for your learning circle to discuss it in the first or third meeting, or not to discuss it at all, do what works for you!

Meeting 1: Reflecting on High School

Video Discussion Questions

Four Shifts

Other than those that Justin reflects on in this video, what major shift(s) in the world do you think should influence rethinking teaching and learning?

Washington Leadership Academy: *Empowering Students with Technology*

Co-founder and Executive Director Stacy Kane says: "I think we have to be a lot more creative about what our definition of a successful graduate looks like." Think of someone in your life (not a public figure) who you consider to be successful. Why do you consider them to be successful, and what qualities or skills do you think contributes to their success? Consider going beyond qualities and skills related to work.

Activities & Assignments

Activity: Considering the Purpose of High School

- Write each of the following questions on a flat surface visible to everyone:
    - When you were in high school, what did you think was the purpose of high school? What did adults tell you the purpose of high school was?
    - In your current opinion, what is the purpose of high school?
    - What is 1 major skill, capability, or area of content knowledge you gained by attending high school?
- Have group members independently brainstorm the answers to the questions on sticky notes, with one answer per sticky note.
- Next, group members should place their answers underneath the questions. Within each of the questions, group similar answers to see if larger themes emerge. For example, did multiple people say that adults told them the purpose of high school was to eventually get a fulfilling career? Consider the following debrief questions and prompts:
    - What were the major categories that emerged under each question? Why do you think those categories emerged?
    - Discuss any answers that were strikingly different from each other.
    - Discuss what factors might influence what students believe the purpose of high school is.
    - How are answers similar or different across the questions? For example, are people's current opinions on the purpose of high school similar or different to how they thought about it back in high school? Discuss what trends you see and possible reasons for those trends.

Activity: Glimpse of Expectations for High School Graduates

- One of the benefits of taking this course in a learning circle is that your colleagues contribute knowledge and varied perspectives of your context. Feel free to spend some time in the meeting looking at external material such as websites, graduation requirements, local news stories, etc. in order to gain some understanding of your school and community's expectations for graduates. However, we recommend that you use your time together to hear from colleagues about what impressions they have about the school and community's priorities. Possible discussion questions may include:

  - What programs or initiatives have learning circle members been involved in that reveal priorities about what students should know and do?

  - Does communication to students, parents, or the larger community reflect the school's priorities? How?

- From your discussion, are there 3 or 4 capabilities or qualities that emerge as especially important for high school graduates in your context?

Assignment: Talk With a Stakeholder (Work Period: March 2 –14, 2019)

- The more perspectives you can collect, the better! We recommend that members of your learning circle interview someone outside of the learning circle and bring key takeaways from that conversation to the meeting. Possible discussion questions might include:

  - When you talked with your stakeholder, what surprised you?

  - Did anything cause you to think differently about the characteristics or capabilities you've previously considered?

  - How do you think the stakeholder's position influenced their responses to your questions?

- If your learning circle meets before anyone has spoken with a stakeholder, consider using this time to brainstorm who you would like to talk to and what you would like to ask them.
- If your learning circle chooses to interview one another, start by brainstorming questions that go beyond what you asked during Activity: Considering the Purpose of High School. Consider asking questions more specific to your colleagues in the room.

Meeting 2: Introduction to the Graduate Profile

Video Discussion Questions

Shrewsbury Public Schools: *Engaging Multiple Perspectives*

- High School Director of English Liza Trombley says "Parents are too often left out of the process of education." Does the school you work in or your community involve parents in reflection on teaching and learning?

- Student Julia D. says, "I think that Shrewsbury's actually giving their students a voice, which I think is really helpful." Does the school you work in or your community currently ask students to reflect on their school experience? What do you think students would say if you asked them to reflect on the purpose of high school and what they're prepared to know or be able to do?

Activites & Assignments

Activity: Brainstorm Characteristics

- Give everyone 10-15 sticky notes. Set a timer for 2 minutes, then ask the learning circle to brainstorm how they would finish the sentence "My graduate has experience with…" with one idea per sticky note. Spend 2 minutes on each prompt in the assignment, then share. Generate as many ideas as you can without judgement; focus on quantity, not quality.

  - **My graduate has experience with…** Example: Solving multidisciplinary problems
  - **My graduate views themselves as…** Example: A strong communicator who can present ideas clearly and concisely
  - **My graduate will know…** Example: Role and structure of government and opportunities for civic participation
  - **My graduate will be ready to [do]…** Example: Manage and deliver a project on time, in accordance with identified needs
  - **The leadership of my school and my community are especially proud of graduates that are like/can do the following…** Example: Can reason thoughtfully about ethical dilemmas in their lives

- Take 5-10 minutes and have people start organizing their ideas of important graduate characteristics into categories on a flat surface visible to everyone. Once you've developed the categories, reflect on these as a group. Which categories have the most sticky notes, and why might that be? Which ideas don't seem to fit neatly into the emerging categories? What ideas are group members most excited about? Are there ideas that may have been left out?

- Consider the ideas that you, your group, or others have generated previously in this course. Does there seem to be cohesion or divergence among the values that emerge?

- 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: Develop First Draft (Work Period: May 13–20, 2019)

For the next two assignments, your learning circle may choose to develop drafts of a graduate profile as a whole group, or each member may choose to develop drafts individually. Below, we provide suggestions for how to make the most of your learning circle if you choose to develop *Individual Graduate Profiles* or if you choose to develop a *Group Gradaute Profile*.

Individual Graduate Profiles

- Have learning circle members follow the assignment instructions in the platform and fill out the [template](#).

- Have members pair up, and each pair trade their filled out template. Set a timer for 10 minutes, and have members give feedback on their partner's draft. As members give feedback, have them consider the following:

    - Given what you know about your school or community, which characteristics on the graduate profile draft do you think are especially important or relevant to your school or community?

    - Is there anything you feel is missing? What would you add, and why?

    - Are there any elements of the profile whose inclusion you don't understand? Consider asking constructive questions to find out more about group members' thinking.

- Return the profile draft to your partner, and discuss your feedback.

Group Graduate Profile

- Now it's time to narrow down the list of characteristics you developed in Activity: Brainstorm Characteristics. Have learning circle members pick 6 characteristics from the list that seem particularly relevant for your context. Have them consider:

    - Based on the videos and readings in this course or your own research, which characteristics are especially relevant to what graduates will need to know or do to be successful in the future?

    - Which characteristics are especially important to your school or community?

    - Think about a particular stakeholder (parent, local business leader, community member, etc.) Which characteristic(s) would they prioritize?

    - When you reflect on your life professionally, civically, personally etc.), which characteristics do you find are especially important?

- On a sticky note, write each of the characteristics on the list you developed in Activity: Brainstorming Characteristics. Place the sticky notes on the walls around the room. Give each learning circle member 3 tokens of some kind (we recommend stickers, sticky notes, different colored markers, etc.) that will represent a vote. Set a timer for 10 minutes, and have learning circle members place tokens on the characteristics they think are the most important. Each person may only place one token per characteristic.

    Note: Instructions for the Group Graduate Profile continue on the next page.

Group Graduate Profile continued

- Determine the 6 characteristics with the highest number of tokens.

- For each characteristic ask someone to explain why they voted for it. For each characteristic, consider asking the following questions:

  - Are the definitions or explanations of the characteristics clear? Would they define the characteristics a different way?

  - Does this characteristic line up with goals that our school has talked about before?

- Remember that this is a draft and will undergo at least one iteration in this course, and hopefully more iterations beyond. This exercise was meant to elicit priorities of the group.

Meeting 3: The Graduate Profile Process

Video Discussion Questions

Openness & Iteration

What are spaces (physical or online) in your community where you could gather feedback throughout the graduate profile process?

Community Charter School of Cambridge: Using Vision to Drive Innovation

Principal Ali Nomani says, "I think iteration and collaboration have been the two hallmarks of doing this work." Does your school have a mission or vision statement? Was that statement created collaboratively? Has that statement gone through iterations over time?

What Should Schools Keep?

Grammatical parsing was once considered by some educators to be an essential part of the school curriculum. Can you think of something else that was once considered extremely important, but is now no longer taught?

Activities & Assignments

Activity: Share & Reflect on Feedback

Whether you developed a graduate profile draft as a learning circle or individually, this activity will be most useful if you share your draft of the profile with someone who is not in your learning circle. However, we understand that not everyone has the time to share outside of the learning circle. If your learning circle is developing individual graduate profiles, you could still use this time to share your graduate profile with someone other than the person you shared it with last meeting.

Individual Graduate Profiles

- Share your graduate profile with someone other than the person you shared it with last meeting.

- Talk with a group member to develop a strategy for getting feedback from a stakeholder. You might brainstorm what stakeholders would be useful to get feedback from (teachers, students, school staff, community members, parents, etc.)

Group Graduate Profile

- If your learning circle meets before members have a chance to get feedback, consider brainstorming a few questions that will help you gather feedback as a group.

- If members of your learning circle are able to meet after one or more person has received feedback on the draft graduate profile, share that feedback with the group. Ask the group the following:

    - What particular elements did people find especially important or relevant to our school or community?

    - What were concerns with the profile, and does anyone in the room share those concerns? How can the group begin to address those concerns?

    - What would you change for the second draft?

    - What questions does the group still have?

Assignment: Develop Second Draft (Work Period: May 20–27, 2019)

Individual Graduate Profiles

- Now is a great time to try to bring your individual graduate profiles together to make a group draft. First, figure out the characteristics that most of the individual profiles have in common. For example, 4 out of 6 of group members' graduate profiles might have "ability to conduct independent research" as an important capability. For each of the characteristics with the highest frequency, have someone define the characteristic and discuss the definition as a group. Would anyone define the characteristic in a different way?

- Once you have a list of the most common characteristics, try to get the list down to 6. (This is not to say that your school or community can only have 6 priorities for graduates, but we think that providing this boundary is useful to help you prioritize. As always, we encourage flexibility, and if you find that you need more or fewer characteristics, feel free to adapt your profile.) Discussion questions that can help you with this process might include:

    - Is the list of characteristics holistic? Does it cover a wide range of factors from content knowledge, social and emotional well-being, skills and behaviors, etc?

    - Is the list of characteristics reflective of your school or community's mission or values?

Group Graduate Profile

Iterate

As a group, review your notes from Activity: Share & Reflect on Feedback, and develop a second version of the draft. Clarify the text defining and describing your graduate profile characteristics before moving on to designing the second draft.

Design

Is there anyone in the group with graphic design familiarity who could make an attractive version of your profile? Think about how your group might use images, vocabulary etc. to make this version specific to your context.

Share

Consider using this time together to brainstorm what might be the best way to share this profile with others. Possible ways to share with the community what you've been doing include an official school or school system website, newsletter, email or mailing lists, social media, etc. Consider physical spaces as well. Could your draft be displayed in the library, in hallways, in the cafeteria, etc.?

Action Plan

- Brainstorm steps that your learning circle could take to continue the process of developing your graduate profile. These steps could be for the group, individuals, or a combination of both. We have listed possible steps in the Assignment: Develop Second Draft in the platform, but we encourage you to think of more steps and to be specific about what would work in your context.

- If possible, ask for volunteers to take one of these steps before the final learning circle meeting.

Meeting 4: Closing & 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.

Presentations

If you have invited people outside of your learning circle to this meeting, consider giving a brief, informal presentation about your work in the course and your process of developing a graduate profile. You might show the initial list of characteristics that you brainstormed and explain how you went from that list to the first draft, and from the first draft to the second draft.

Solicit Feedback

What do the newcomers think about your graduate profile? Possible questions you might ask them include:

- Are the definitions or explanations of the characteristics clear? Would they define or explain the characteristics a different way?
- Given what you know about your school or community, what characteristics in the graduate profile draft do you think are especially important or relevant to your school or community?
- Is there anything you feel is missing? What would you add, and why?
- Are there any elements of the profile whose inclusion you don't understand?

Future Work

- Did anyone take steps from the action plan for continuing the graduate profile development process developed in the last meeting? If so, have them share their progress.
- What are the goals for the future of this process?
- What are next steps for the group and for individuals in the room?

Celebrate!

Congratulate and thank everyone in the room for their participation and contribution. Pop the bubbly, and reflect on your work in the learning circle.

Appendix I: Social Media Templates

TWITTER

Join @bjfr and @MoocsTsl May 2 for free MOOC: Envisioning the Graduate of the Future **#FutureGradsMOOC #rethinkhighschool** https://tinyurl.com/egfmooc

EMAIL

Dear _____,

I invite you to join me in taking a free online course for educators starting May 2, 2019 called Envisioning the Graduate of the Future. This course is taught by Justin Reich and the course team from the MIT Teaching Systems Lab. You can register for the course now. 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 registered in the course. As a learning circle, we will discuss course content, participate in collaborative activities, and support each other's work.

Course blurb:

> On May 2, 2019, join Justin Reich and the course team from the MIT Teaching Systems Lab in Envisioning the Graduate of the Future. This course is for everyone interested in the future of education, from educators to community members. Over the four weeks of this course, you will embark on a collaborative and exploratory design process to reflect on the purpose and goals of secondary school and expectations for graduates. You'll learn how schools have benefited from developing an artifact called a graduate profile, a document that makes explicit the characteristics, capabilities, and dispositions a particular school's graduates are expected to have. As you begin the process of drafting a graduate profile, you'll learn more about your own context, such as its values and beliefs. You'll leave the course with a shareable artifact that communicates a vision of a multi-faceted secondary school graduate.

FACEBOOK/LINKEDIN

On May 2, 2019, join Justin Reich and the course team from the MIT Teaching Systems Lab in Envisioning the Graduate of the Future, a new, free online course on the edX platform. This course is for everyone interested in the future of education, from educators to community members. Over the four weeks of this course, you will embark on a collaborative and exploratory design process to reflect on the purpose and goals of secondary school and expectations for graduates. You'll leave the course with a shareable artifact that communicates a vision of a multi-faceted secondary school graduate. Enroll now (https://www.edx.org/course/envisioning-the-graduate-of-the-future) and share the course with others using #FutureGradsMOOC.

Appendix II: Inviting Non-Learning Circle Members to Meetings

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

Dear _____,

I have been taking an online course about exploring the purpose of high school and what successful high school graduates should know and be able to do called Envisioning the Graduate of the Future. I am taking this course in a learning circle, which is a group of registered learners who meet in person to discuss 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 Envisioning the Graduate of the Future edX page or the Facebook page, and follow #FutureGradsMOOC and @MoocsTsl on Twitter. You might even consider enrolling to look over some of the course content.

I hope to see you at our next meeting!

Appendix III: Course Calendar

MAY						
Sunday	**Monday**	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**	**Saturday**
28	29	30	1	2 **COURSE START**	3	4
5	6	7	8 Assignment: Talk with a Stakeholder Work Period	9	10	11
12	13 **PART 2 RELEASED**	14	15 Assignment: Develop First Draft Work Period	16	17	18
19	20	21 Assignment: Develop Second Draft Work Period	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30 **COURSE END**	31	1

Here is a list of important dates to remember:

- **Welcome and Course Overview** - available May 2, 2019

- **Part 1: Reflecting on High School** - available May 2, 2019

- **Welcome YouTube Live Event:** May 8, 2019 6:00 PM UTC

- **Assignment 1 Suggested Due Date:** May 14, 2019

- **Part 2: Focusing on the Graduate Profile Process** - available May 13, 2019

- **Assignment 2 Suggested Due Date**: May 20, 2019

- **Certificate Upgrade Deadline**: May 24, 2019

- **Assignment 3 Suggested Due Date:** May 27, 2019

- **Final Youtube Live Event**: May 29, 2019 6:00 PM UTC

- **Course Ends:** May 30, 2019 11:30 PM UTC