

Community Meeting (Sep 25, 2019): Learning Circles

Description

Presenters: Grif Peterson

This week, we'll be joined by Grif Peterson, executive director at [Peer 2 Peer University \(P2PU\)](#). For the past four years, P2PU has been developing and supporting learning circles: groups of people who meet in public spaces like libraries to learn something together using online courses. Learning circles began at Chicago Public Library, and have since spread to more than 100 cities and towns around the world, including Toronto. Grif will briefly introduce the project, sharing some insights on how P2PU's conceptions of public space, online education, and peer learning have evolved during this project, with plenty of time for questions and discussion. He and Jutta have spoken a little bit about possible collaborations, and he'd love to explore that with others as well.

Notes

[Google Doc](#)

Participants:

- Cindy - developer; interested in learning more about directions p2pu is going forward
- Dana - (vancouver) designer; informal/community-based education perspective; [social justice repair kit](#)
- Daniel - developer; [coding to learn and create](#); interested in inclusivity in f2f settings
- Gregor - developer; [storytelling tool](#) (multi-modal content authoring)
- Grif
- Jonathan works with accessibility; thinking about learning circles within formal ed alongside LMS, etc.
- Joseph
 - Inclusive Developer at the IDRC
 - <https://morphic.world/> (w/ Cindy)
 - Similar to <https://www.web4all.ca>
- Justin - developer; interested in learning circles to overcome problems w/ online courses
- Vera - Project Manager at the IDRC--We Count is newest project, also manage Consulting and Training services & SNOW (our educator/parent/learner website), also teach graduate level research methods at OCAD U
- <https://cities.inclusivedesign.ca/>
- <https://guide.inclusivedesign.ca/insights/DiverseParticipationAndPerspectives.html>

Overview from Grif

[Intro to P2PU slides](#)

[OER for learning circles](#) (slides 20-27)

[Facilitator training course](#)

P2PU is geographically distributed, located in Boston, Canada, South Africa

Learning Circles:

- non-formal study groups
 - Make MOOC retention rates higher with face-to-face learning
- Working with many library organizations around the world, including TPL
- Early on libraries didn't have experience with on-going programming for adults. In the past most had been more in the style of one-off workshops
- Librarians given the knowledge required to help guide people through the resources, even if they don't have in-depth course-specific knowledge
- Format: 2hrs/week for 6 weeks
- Developed a tool for organizing the meetings for the learning circles
 - Had found that other existing systems didn't match their needs
- Through running the learning circles they've been able to identify good online courses, they've added these to their site (about 280 listed so far, 230 of which have been added by facilitators)
- Need a P2PU account to create a learning circle, but don't need one to join a learning circle
- Learning Circles are being run by the Kenya National Library Service with great success
- Some Learning Circles are funded through tuition money. Students go to a formal class, and then go to a learning circle to go through an online course
- Learning circles don't have to be based on an online course
- Learning circle size is recommended to be between 5 and 12 people or per facilitator
- The "good enough" course - the face to face dynamics makes up much of the learning process (i.e. don't need to engineer group dynamics etc)