Facilitator Guide

For Supercharged Storytimes Self-Paced Course

Photo: People with lightbulbs by rawpixel on Pexels

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This Facilitator Guide is inspired by the excellent example set by Peer-to-Peer University's Learning Circles Facilitator Handbook and by the adaptation by Richmond Public Library in their Supervisor Learning Circles Facilitator Guide.

Use and adapt the materials

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Introduction

Supercharged Storytimes is a research-based approach for storytime practitioners that supports them to intentionally apply research tools and practices to boost early literacy in young children attending library storytimes.

WebJunction's goal is to provide free and widely available training on this approach by offering a self-paced course that is available to anyone, anytime, anywhere. To amplify the use of the self-paced course, we encourage anyone to use this Facilitator Guide as the basis for organizing, structuring and leading a group of learners through the course.

Why Learn Together?

"By convening a group of learners who are interested in a similar topic, you've got the basis for an open, collaborative learning environment that has the potential to be the support system many learners need. Peer learning can create a rich learning environment in which everyone simultaneously teaches and learns, acts and observes, speaks and listens." (P2PU Learning Circles Facilitator Handbook, www.p2pu.org).

Learning groups are lightly-facilitated study groups for people to learn together. They provide a collaborative environment that has the potential to increase motivation as the group sets attainable goals together and connects their learning to practical application. Learners in a group share ideas and insights, answer each other's questions, and expose each other to new perspectives and solutions. They form bonds as a community and reflect together on progress, which boosts confidence.

What is a Learning Group Facilitator?

Learning group facilitators are not teachers, and are not expected to be subject matter experts with "correct" answers on the topics. Your primary role is to convene and coordinate the group and to guide discussions. As a facilitator, you will be helping to cultivate an environment in which learning and sharing among participants leads to desired outcomes. You may be involved with the group as a co-learner or you may be guiding at the higher level of a training coordinator or supervisor.

- Co-learner: in this role, you will be learning the course material alongside of your group members, that is, viewing all the instructional videos and doing the activities and assignments.

- Training coordinator/supervisor: at this higher level, you won't need to get into the weeds of the course content but you will need to:
    - View the Introduction to Supercharged Storytimes video and understand the overview of the course.
    - Scan the course modules to get an idea of the topics covered, the sequence in which they are presented, the lengths of the videos, and the applied learning activities.

Supercharged Storytimes Curriculum

The Supercharged Storytimes self-paced course covers how to incorporate six early literacy components into storytimes with intentionality, how to engage with parents and caregivers, how to assess the effectiveness and impact of storytimes, and how to apply an equity lens to outreach and programming.

As a result of taking the course, practitioners will be able to:

- Explain the impact of library storytime practices on early literacy development in children, referencing significant studies such as the VIEWS2 research.
- Describe the key elements of a supercharged storytime and integrate them into their own storytimes.
- Be intentional in supporting early literacy behaviors in relation to books and storytime activities through the use of the Early Literacy Planning Tool.
- Increase interactivity with children during storytimes, observe children's behaviors, and engage parents/caregivers to reinforce these behaviors at home and in other environments.
- Share early literacy information with parents/caregivers, providing them with ideas and resources they can use with their children in everyday life.

Time commitment

For self-paced course-takers

The self-paced course is comprised of six modules. For a practitioner, working through the course involves watching a total of six hours of video recordings (approximately 1 hour per module) and doing the applied learning on each topic, which can often be combined with the storytime preparation and delivery that library staff are already doing. However, it is optimal to allow two weeks in between modules for the applied learning. It's important to allow room for the Supercharged Storytime cycle of planning/delivery/reflection for the most effective individual or group learning experience. Please anticipate a span of about 10 weeks for your cohort to complete the course.
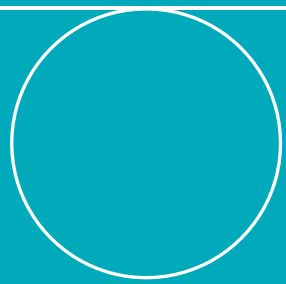
For facilitators
Allow an average of 1-2 hours per week on top of your own self-paced learning time to coordinate and guide your group. This will involve both pre- and post-session preparation, as well as active facilitation during sessions and moderating online discussions between sessions. Communication before and after each session to set expectations and reinforce key takeaways is important in the lifecycle of learning.

Overview of Course Structure

The Supercharged Storytimes self-paced course is organized in six modules, with instructional videos, related resources, activities, and forum discussions in each module.

Module	Video Content
Module One ♦ Introduction to Supercharged Storytimes ♦ Oral Language ♦ Interactivity ♦ Intentionality ♦ Early Literacy Planning Tool	7 videos Total time: **1 hr 17 min**
Module Two ♦ Phonological Awareness ♦ Print Awareness/Concepts ♦ Connect and Engage with Parents & Caregivers ♦ Letter Knowledge	17 videos (includes several short demonstration videos) Total time: **1 hr 48 min**
Module Three ♦ Vocabulary ♦ Background Knowledge	5 videos Total time: **1 hr 4 min**
Module Four ♦ Self-Assessment and Peer Observation ♦ Project Outcome Toolkit for Early Childhood Literacy	7 videos Total time: **1 hr 10 min**
Module Five ♦ Getting to Equity ♦ Discovery and Building Connections ♦ Welcoming Spaces and Collections	3 videos Total time: **38 min**
Module Six ♦ Advocating for the Value of Storytimes and Libraries ♦ Community of Practice	1 video Total time: **14 min**

Facilitating Your Group

Tactics and Tips for Success

Foster Social Connections

Members of your Learning Group come with varied personal experiences and different motivations. As a facilitator, understanding what each individual brings to the group and what motivated them to join will help you cultivate an environment in which learners can clearly see how the Learning Group will help them achieve their desired goals.

In this section, you'll find suggestions for building social cohesion with your group, from preparing the meeting space to establishing norms for learning together. Whether you're convening your group face-to-face, live-online or asynchronously online, you can promote the sense of community that increases motivation to learn.

Create a Welcoming Environment

First impressions are important for learners entering the group space for the first time. Whether you are meeting in person or online, be aware of the environment and do your best to create a positive, welcoming atmosphere for learning.

Setting up the **in-person space**:

- Set up chairs in a circle for a non-hierarchical arrangement.
- Provide name tags (and table tents); orient participants to restrooms, login for wifi, etc.
- Adjust room lighting and temperature if possible.
- Add colorful touches, such as flowers or posters.

Setting up the **live-online space**:

- Provide a pre-session orientation to the online platform so learners can test their audio and video, and get comfortable with the interactive features.
- If possible, have a tech support person to troubleshoot technical situations with participants in the background so the entire group is not delayed by one person's tech issues.
- If using video, consider the backdrop behind you. Is it colorful and/or interesting to look at or is it drab and gray? Or is it too full of details that might distract attention?

Setting up the **asynchronous online space**:

- Encourage participants to read *Maximize Your Learning Experience* in the Getting Started section of the course for tips on maximizing online learning.
- Provide clear directions on how to connect with each other virtually and set clear expectations for participating asynchronously.
- Be aware that not everyone will be active in online forums, but realize that "lurking"

or just reading posts is how some people prefer to learn online. If you're in a position to award a certificate of completion or other form of continuing education credit, you may decide to require at least one response per discussion question in order to earn the credit.

Create a group atmosphere

Social cohesion begins to develop within an hour of people being together. Some ideas for encouraging social cohesion include:

- Agreeing on a group name
- Establishing rituals (traditions, habits, weekly activities)
- Using plural pronouns (*we* instead of *I*)

Start with a Check-in

Take some time to go over what a Learning Group is and help members understand what to expect. Clarify your role as a *member* of the circle, not the teacher. You are all learning together.

Then get to know each other. You may want to start each session by going around the circle. For your first session, you might start with introductions. As the facilitator, be prepared to go first and model this.

- Who you are
- Where you work
- Your role in relation to library storytimes
- Share a favorite children's book, whether or not you are a storytime provider.

For subsequent sessions, use this check-in time to take the pulse of the group experience:

- What's working well for you in the self-paced course? What's not working?
- What's working well in the Learning Group? What's not working?
- What might you need help with?
- Recap what your group learned and decided at the previous session
- What were the key takeaways?
- Were there any parking lot items or unanswered questions?

Establish Norms for Learning Together

Starting with your first session, agree to learning norms or ground rules with your participants. These can be customized or changed later if the group agrees.

You may want to keep the norms prominently displayed for your group discussions to keep them front-and-center in the eyes of participants. For face-to-face meetings, you could have them written on a flip chart at each session. For live-online sessions, the norms could be listed on an introductory slide. For entirely asynchronous discussions, you could send the list with your email reminders.

The goal is to create a safe zone for constructive participation.

Sample norms to follow:

- Be present and listen when others speak.
- Speak one at a time.
- Take responsibility for your own learning and support that of the group.
- Help us stay on time.
- Accept that all ideas are valid.
- Lean into your discomfort. Explore ideas where there is disagreement rather than dismissing them.
- Provide timely feedback.
- Avoid personal attacks and don't take disagreements personally.
- Respect confidentiality. Acknowledge that the Learning Group is a safe space for discussion.
- Have fun! Enjoy the social aspect of your learning community.

Tips for Fostering Discussions

During a Learning Group meeting, your primary role is to foster healthy and productive discussions that further the group's learning. It is a balancing act between providing enough direction and control to stay on track with the topic of the session and providing autonomy to the group members to discover their own best paths to learning. It takes practice. The following tips are good to keep in mind or on hand, whether you're meeting in person or virtually.

Keep discussions on-track

Provide a meeting agenda and set time guidelines for the flow of the discussion. You may appoint a timekeeper in the group to call out when it's time to move to a new agenda item.

Use a "parking lot" if needed to record any runaway topics or unanswered questions on a flip chart or white board. Doing this shows that you hear the concern and that it will be revisited, while allowing you to refocus the group on the course or discussion at hand.

It's up to you to let group members know when they are veering off-topic. Be ready to sideline conversations or tangents that could get your group off-topic by saying things like:

- "We'll be learning more about that in the next session."
- "Let's put that in our parking lot and circle back after we get through this course."
- "We are now discussing something that isn't on our agenda. What does the group want to do?"

Maintain awareness

Be observant and learn to read the energy of the room. Throughout the meeting, take the pulse of participants' engagement and mood. Who seems really motivated today? Who is particularly quiet? Is one learner quiet because they are struggling with a basic concept? Ask somebody who is a few steps ahead if they don't mind helping.

Acknowledge individuals frequently, visibly, and sincerely, and encourage other participants to do the same. This applies to online discussions as well as in-person.

Ensure that everyone can participate

Ensure that all participants feel supported, seen, heard, and encouraged.

As facilitator, be mindful of different personalities, and create opportunities for everyone to have a chance to participate in discussions. This may involve asking

targeted questions or checking in with participants who haven't yet spoken. Use a strategy such as, "Let's go around the group and hear what everyone thinks about …"

You want to be intentional about surfacing differences of opinion, particularly if you sense that some group members are holding back and reluctant to challenge the dominant opinion. You could say, "I think we're trying to avoid disagreeing with each other. Who would be willing to voice a different opinion?"

Listen actively

Expect to listen more than speak. Listen intently to understand what each group member is saying. If it isn't clear, paraphrase what someone has said, that is, repeat back what you heard. For example, "What I'm hearing is [paraphrase]. Is that right?" Ask probing questions such as, "Can you tell me more about that?"

Encourage new thinking

Elicit different viewpoints and perspectives. You might ask participants to consider the idea or situation from a different angle. For example, "As a caregiver at storytime, how do you think you would react to an early literacy tip?"

Synthesize ideas

Aim to get group members to comment and build on each other's thoughts and ideas. Ask questions such as "Jackie, what would you add to Ellen's comment?" Conclude each discussion with a wrap-up of the key take-aways, asking the group for additions or edits to your summary. Alternately, you could ask a group member to summarize.

Manage questions

Remember that you are not the teacher of the group. When a question comes up, emphasize that the group members are their own valuable resource. Probe for knowledge-sharing with questions like:

- "Did anyone else run into the same problem?"

- "Where would you start looking to figure that out?"

- "Have you thought of looking for ideas from other practitioners in the discussion forums within the self-paced course?"

Flip frustrations into constructive dialogue

If conversation in a session becomes contentious, it's a good time to remind members of the agreed-upon norms. (See page 9) You may even want to add a new norm in the middle of a conflict.

Take the lead in exploring multiple perspectives involved in a disagreement. Remind group members to avoid becoming emotional or argumentative, but to state their point of view calmly and clearly. Call out inappropriate behavior and reinforce productive behavior.

Aim to reframe frustrations in a constructive way and use them as an opportunity for learners to work together. You might ask someone to give specific examples to back up their statement. This allows the group to look at a specific situation rather than a more general opinion. If someone disagrees with some part of the course content, ask them to be specific about what they would recommend to improve it.

You may want to stop the discussion to focus on the emotions in the room, asking each person to say how they are feeling in the moment.

Step out of the facilitator role

If you are learning the course alongside your group members, you may want to share your comments and perspectives on the content. That's fine, but it's best to let the group know that you are stepping out of your role as facilitator.

You might ask a group member to assume the facilitator role for a while. This invests leadership outside of yourself and reduces dependency on one person.

Photo: People with speech bubbles by rawpixel on Pexels
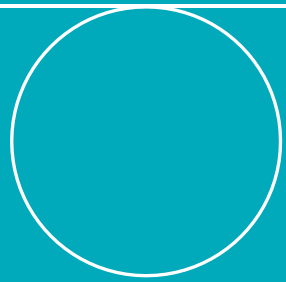
Planning for Group Learning

Logistics and Checklists

Advance Planning at a Glance

This high-level look at the steps involved in planning and implementing your Learning Group is meant to help you plan your time and effort and check off items as you accomplish them. It may look intimidating, but each of these steps is attainable and is explained in more detail on the following pages.

6 Weeks Prior

- Discuss plans with any affiliated organizations
- Find a space (physical or virtual)
- Choose dates and times
- Identify the learners you want to include in your group

4 Weeks Prior

- Explore the online course
- Promote the opportunity to intended audiences
- Gather information about your participants

2 Weeks Prior

- Confirm attendance with all applicants
- Confirm space reservation with venue or online setup
- Revisit the online course content to create an agenda for the meeting

2-4 Days Prior

- Prepare the final agenda
- Send reminder email to the Learning Group participants
- Prepare yourself for facilitation
- Collect and confirm availability of supplies needed

During and Wrap-up

- Set up the environment to be welcoming and inclusive
- Begin each meeting with a check-in
- Set up a "parking lot" for topics not covered in the meeting
- Summarize the key take-aways for the meeting
- Review the parking lot topics and decide if/how you will address them
- Set upcoming expectations

Phase 1 Checklist (4-6 weeks prior)

Getting organized well before the first meeting of your learning group will lead to a better experience for everyone—for you as the planner and for the group members. You will be more calm and prepared when you first greet your group. Participants will be able to focus on the learning right from the start.

6 Weeks Prior

☐ Discuss plans with any affiliated organizations

- ◆ Do you need to obtain buy-in from a supervisor or director?
- ◆ Are you collaborating with other organizations or libraries?

☐ Find a space (physical or virtual)

- ◆ If you will meet in person, locate and secure the room or other physical space for your group to meet.
- ◆ If you will meet virtually, identify the tools you will use to connect. If you are trying a new tool, test it now to confirm that it will work for your purpose.

☐ Choose dates and times

- ◆ Determine how frequently you will meet with the group. Block out the dates and times in your schedule.
- ◆ If it's a very small group, you may be able to wait and poll the group about their preferred times.
- ◆ Confirm that the physical or virtual space you have reserved is available for all the dates/times identified.

☐ Identify the learners you want to include in your group

- ◆ Learning Groups work best with small, enthusiastic groups of people—ideally between 4 and 10 learners.
- ◆ Do you have a list of specific people to invite? Great!
- ◆ Will you need to promote the opportunity to target audiences to solicit participation? Think about how you will persuade them about the benefits and value of joining the Learning Group.

4 Weeks Prior

☐ Explore the online course

- ♦ Look through the full Supercharged Storytimes self-paced course to determine how you might want to align the modules and topics with the dates and number of group meetings you are planning.

- ♦ Remember, you are not expected to be a teacher of the content, but you will be the one who guides the group through the content.

☐ Promote the opportunity to intended audiences

- ♦ Prepare marketing messages and materials. This could be a printed flyer or poster, or an online announcement. What's most important is to convey the benefits of learning in a group with *you* as facilitator. Refer to the Pitching It to Your Peers Handout. Be sure to include:

  - ♦ The course: Supercharged Storytimes Self-Paced Course

  - ♦ Dates, times, and duration of the Learning Group engagement

  - ♦ Venue for the meetings (face-to-face, online, or both)

  - ♦ A contact number, weblink, or email address where people can find out

- ♦ Identify channels for communication and broadcast the opportunity (email, listservs, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

- ♦ If you have a specific list of participants, prepare and send invitations. Include your persuasive messaging even if you think they are already on board.

☐ Gather information about your participants

- ♦ If you have a small group and you know the members personally, you can communicate informally in person or by phone or email.

- ♦ For larger audiences, it's helpful to have an application for the purpose of getting a little background on the learners, not to create a selective admission process. The application could include:

  - ♦ Name and email address/phone number (so you can contact them)

  - ♦ Their goals (so you know what they are looking to get out of it)

  - ♦ Their experience with self-paced learning, online learning, or group learning.

  - ♦ If they have the necessary technology for accessing the self-paced course and for joining interactive online meetings (computer, internet connection, or phone)

Phase 2 Checklist (2 weeks to 2 days prior)

As you get closer to the start of the Learning Group, you'll be glad you already set several things in motion. Note that the checklist for "2 Days Prior" will apply to the lead-up to all of your subsequent group meetings.

2 Weeks Prior

☐ Confirm attendance with all applicants

- ◆ Send a welcoming email message to those who have agreed to participate in your Learning Group.
    - ◆ Include the dates, times, and location so participants can mark their calendars.
    - ◆ Inform them that you'll be sending more information about location and access soon.

☐ Confirm space reservation with venue or online setup

- ◆ For a physical space, identify the primary contact person. Confirm the room setup that you'll need (seating, tables, easels, screen, projector, Wi-Fi connection, etc.)

- ◆ For online meetups, familiarize yourself with the functions of the software or platform. Determine if you will need a tech support person for the group sessions.

☐ Revisit the online course content to create an agenda for the meeting

- ◆ Look at the module(s) of the Supercharged Storytimes self-paced course that you will cover in your first group discussion. Review the Discussion Guides for Modules One and Two to determine if they meet the needs of your group and if you want to modify them.
    - ◆ What is the main subject matter learners will be covering this week?
    - ◆ How does this tie into the major goals of the course?
    - ◆ Are there any activities this week that would be enhanced by doing them as a group?
- ◆ For co-learners: if you will be taking the full course yourself, you could start going through the videos activities now so that you'll be one or two steps ahead of the rest of your group.

2-3 Days Prior to Each Meeting

☐ Prepare the final agenda

- Include the structural part of the meeting:
    - For the first session, include the introductions and review meeting norms.
    - For subsequent sessions, include the recap of the previous session and review of what's working/not working for the group.
    - For all sessions, include the main topics for discussion and summary of key take-aways.
- Identify specific resources you might want to link to or print out.

☐ Send reminder email to the Learning Group participants

- Include:
    - Date, time, and location (physical address or login information)
    - Technology requirements
    - Agenda for the meeting, with links to sections and/or resources in the that will be relevant to the course discussion and activities

☐ Prepare yourself for facilitation

- Review the Discussion Guides you'll be using for this meeting so it's fresh in your mind.
- Think about your goals for the session in alignment with the Discussion Guide
- Review the Facilitating Your Group section of this guide.

☐ Collect and confirm availability of supplies needed

The following list of supplies is for in-person meetings:

- name tags, sign-in sheet, and printed handouts
- flip chart or white board, markers
- monitor or projector if viewing course content together
- outlets and power strip(s) for laptops
- snacks and/or coffee, drinks

Phase 3 Checklist (During and wrap-up)

All the careful preparation culminates in the direct interactions with your Learning Group. Whether it's in-person or online, it's most important to help members feel engaged with the group and the learning. This list is not intended as a prescription, but as suggestions for how you might conduct your meetings.

Start of each session

☐ Set up the environment to be welcoming and inclusive.

- ◆ Refer to "Setup a Welcoming Environment" on page 7, which includes suggestions for in-person, live-online, and synchronous engagements.

☐ Begin each meeting with a check-in.

- ◆ First meeting:
  - ◆ Give everyone the opportunity to introduce themselves.
  - ◆ Establish the norms for group learning.
- ◆ Subsequent meetings:
  - ◆ Acknowledge and introduce any new people.
  - ◆ Address any adjustments to what's working or not working for the group.
  - ◆ Recap the key take-aways from the previous meeting and go over the agenda.

☐ Set up a "parking lot" for topics not covered in the meeting.

- ◆ In-person: use a flip chart to collect topics
- ◆ Online: designate a discussion thread just for parking lot topics.

Wrap-up of each session

☐ Summarize the key takeaways for the meeting.

- ◆ You can do this in your more objective role as facilitator.
- ◆ Or you can have the group identify their key take-aways and then synthesize them into your summary.
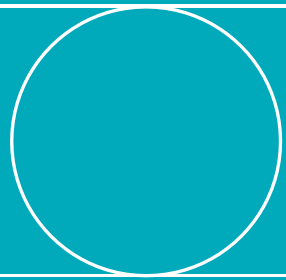
☐ Review the parking lot topics and decide if/how you will address them.

☐ Set upcoming expectations.

- ◆ Remind everyone of the schedule, logistics, and topics for the next meeting.
- ◆ Review the learning targets and expectations for group members.

Appendix

Module Discussion Guides

The Appendix includes six **Discussion Guides**, one for each module of the self-paced course.

Discussion Guide Notes

- Discussions and activities in the guides assume that learners have been through the self-paced course content for that module.

- The guides are focused on the content of Supercharged Storytimes. They do not include the recurring conventions of a Learning Group, such as initial check-in, debrief of parking lot items, or summary and wrap-up.

- The questions and activities provided in each guide are only intended as possibilities, with no expectation that you would pursue all of them. Please adapt the guides to fit with your group's meeting schedule and to meet the needs and interests of your particular group of learners.

- Each module guide includes the discussion question(s) presented in the self-paced course, where comments flow from the large number of storytime practitioners who are taking the course on their own. It's your choice whether you ask your group to read or post there.

Photo: Circle by OpenClipart-Vectors on Pixabay

Discussion Guide: Module ONE

Module One Contents and Timing

Topic	Resources
Introduction to Supercharged Storytimes	▪ Video (instructional): 11:50 min ▪ Overview of Supercharged Storytimes (PDF)
Oral Language	▪ Video (instructional): 12:42 min ▪ Video (demo): 3:33
Interactivity	▪ Interactive Reading Handout (PDF) ▪ Video (instructional): 14:11 min ▪ Video (demo): 5:57 min ▪ Interactivity Self-Reflection Worksheet (DOC) ▪ Discussion forum
Intentionality and the Early Literacy Planning Tool (ELPT)	▪ Video (instructional): 19:25 min ▪ Early Literacy Planning Tool (PDF) ▪ Video (instructional): 8:54 min

Course Discussion

Module One has one discussion forum embedded in the self-paced course:

Interactive reading and intentionality: What insights can you share about how you are being interactive in your storytimes? What you might do differently in future storytimes?

Additional Group Discussions and Activities

Build on the discussion in the public forum
Whether or not your group members are posting in the public forum, you might extend that discussion to your private group.
Ask group members:
- What new ideas did you see posted by others that you want to try?
- What questions came up in the public forum; for example, "interactivity can be a challenge due to the size of the group." Let's see if we can come up with some solutions to that challenge.

Watch the brief demo video for Oral Language together
- Review the group's understanding of Oral Language as the foundation of all other early literacy skills (the ability of children to understand, speak, and use words to communicate).
- How does knowing something about how a child's brain works help you to be intentional with early literacy skills?

Discuss intentionality

Intentionality is the core of Supercharged Storytimes, the idea that HOW you read (talk, sing, write, play) with children matters more than what you read.
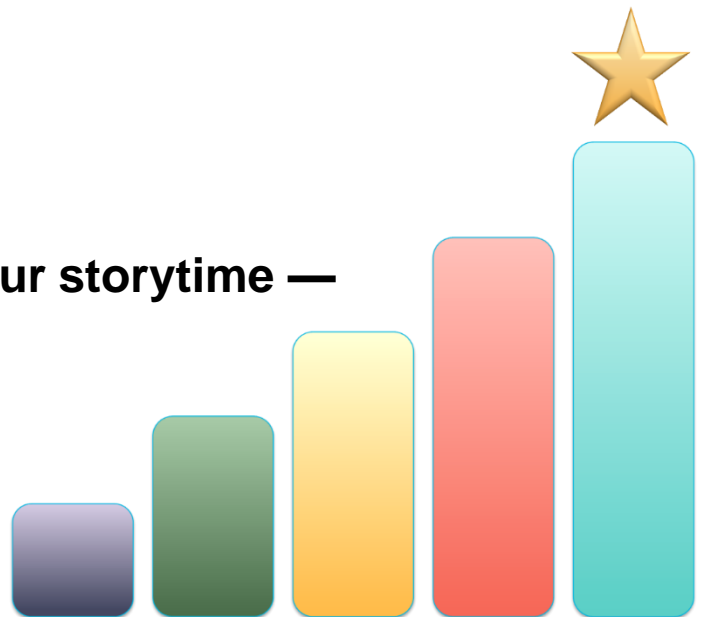
- Encourage the group to talk about what this means to them, about the difference in emphasis on "how" versus "what."
- If they are already doing some of the actions related to early literacy components, how does intentionality change their approach?

Debrief impressions of the Early Literacy Planning Tool

The Early Literacy Planning Tool (ELPT) and Worksheet will be used throughout the course.

- What are the first impressions of the tool?
- What is the reaction to the idea of doing more deliberate planning for their storytimes?
- If group members seem intimidated by the ELPT, you can reassure them that they will be able to take one step at a time as they are ready on their journey of intentionality.

Intentionality can transform your storytime — one step at a time!

Discussion Guide: Module TWO

Module Two Contents and Timing

Topic	Resources
Phonological Awareness	▪ Early Learning Planning Tool for Phonological Awareness (PDF) ▪ Video (instructional): 13:07 min ▪ Video (demo): 4:38 min ▪ Early Literacy Planning Tool Worksheet (DOC) ▪ Early Literacy Planning Tool Worksheet Sample (PDF) ▪ Discussion forum
Print Awareness and Print Concepts	▪ Early Literacy Planning Tool for Print Awareness/ Concepts (PDF) ▪ Video (instructional): 10:26 min ▪ Video (demo): 3:13 min
Connect and Engage with Parents and Caregivers	▪ Video – Part 1 (instructional – Saroj Ghoting): 19:36 min ▪ Video (instructional – Mari Nowitz): 13:50 min ▪ Video (demo): 2:11 min ▪ Video (demo): 1:13 min ▪ Early Literacy Planning Tool Worksheet (DOC) ▪ Discussion forum ▪ Video – Part 2 (instructional – Ghoting): 11:43 min ▪ Video (demo): 1:13 min
Letter Knowledge	▪ Early Literacy Planning Tool for Letter Knowledge (PDF) ▪ Video (instructional): 10:19 min ▪ Video (demo): 4:03 min

Course Discussion

Module Two has two discussion forums embedded in the self-paced course:

Phonological Awareness: Now that you've used the Early Literacy Planning Tool worksheet to be intentional about Phonological Awareness, what insights can you share (or what did you notice) about the storytime cycle of planning, delivery, and assessment? How did this work change your storytime?

Engaging Parents and Caregivers: What concerns might you have about including an early literacy tip for parents and caregivers in your storytimes? How might you address these concerns?

Additional Group Discussions and Activities

Recommended resources
Suggest that group members bring print-outs or electronic copies of:
- [Early Literacy Planning Tool for Phonological Awareness, Oral Language](#), [Print Awareness/Concepts](#) and/or [Letter Knowledge](#)
- [Early Literacy Planning Tool Worksheet](#)
- [Early Literacy Planning Tool Worksheet - Sample](#)

Reflect on the planning-delivery-assessment cycle
Module Two asks learners to begin to practice the planning-delivery-assessment cycle, beginning with using the Early Literacy Planning Tool (ELPT) and Worksheet for the early literacy components they've learned about so far.
Ask group members:
- When you looked through the strategies in the ELPT, what did you discover you are already doing?
- Review the ELPT worksheet and check in to see if there is any confusion about filling it in. Work together as a group to fill in a worksheet sample and see what observations surface.
- Now that you've used the ELPT worksheet to be intentional about early literacy components, let's reflect or debrief as a group: How did it go? What insights or ideas can you share about the strategy you chose. How do you think it changed (will change) your storytime?

Practice early literacy strategies
Meeting with a group in real time is a great opportunity to practice with each other and test out your ideas.
For face-to-face meetups:
- Ask group members to bring a favorite children's book to the meeting.
- Each person takes a turn demonstrating how they would be intentional about Phonological Awareness, Print Awareness, or Letter Knowledge.
- After everyone has had a turn, discuss their strategies. Talk about how they might be intentional with songs or other storytime activities.
For live-online:
- Provide PowerPoint slides with screen shots of storytime book pages and ask group members to share ideas about how they would be intentional with each example. They might share ideas in chat or by using annotation tools directly on the screen.
- Follow up with a discussion about the strategies and intentionality.
- If you have video capability, encourage group members to demonstrate in front of the camera with a book or song.
For asynchronous:
- Pose a discussion question similar to the one embedded in the self-paced course: "Now that you've used the ELPT worksheet to be intentional about phonological awareness, print awareness or letter knowledge, what insights can you share (or what did you notice) about the process of planning and assessment or about how it changed your storytime?"
- If your group is small, encourage them to read through some of the responses in the self-paced course forum and share any comments that stood out to them.

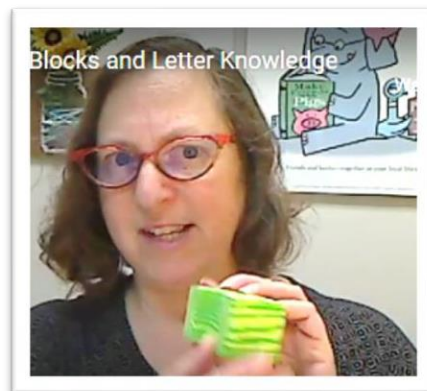*Explore confidence levels for including parent/caregiver tips in storytime*
For a variety of reasons, many storytime providers feel hesitant about sharing early literacy tips with parents and caregivers.

- Present the checklist from the [Module Two Learner Guide](#) as the stimulus for having group members share their fears and feelings.

  ❑ It feels/will feel awkward and not fun
  ❑ Interrupting my storytime will lose kids' attention
  ❑ I don't want to sound "teachy" or condescending
  ❑ I'm not an early literacy expert
  ❑ Will they even listen to me?
  ❑ I've tried it and it didn't go well
  ❑ I'm excited to try it but I'm shy or nervous
  ❑ I already do this in my storytimes
  ❑ Other

- Ask group members to offer ideas or personal experiences for overcoming these hesitations.

Watch parent/caregiver tip demonstration videos together
Mari Nowitz created a series of short videos that are designed to help practitioners feel more at ease about including parent/caregiver tips.

- Select 2-3 videos from Mari's [Parent & Caregiver Tips](#) to watch together.
- After each video, ask group members about their impression of Mari's delivery of tips. Which ideas or approaches resonate for their own practice?
- Discuss ways to increase their engagement and confidence gradually, developing a relationship with the adults before focusing too hard on how "effective" the tip may be for early literacy.

Discussion Guide: Module THREE

Module Three Contents and Timing

Topic	Resources
Vocabulary	▪ Early Literacy Planning Tool – Vocabulary (PDF) ▪ Video (instructional): 12:43 min ▪ Video (demo): 3:34 min ▪ Early Literacy Planning Tool Worksheet (DOC)
Background Knowledge	▪ Early Literacy Planning Tool – Background Knowledge (PDF) ▪ Video – Part 1 (instructional): 14:38 min ▪ Video (demo): 10:28 min ▪ How to Get Your Mind to Read (article – weblink) ▪ Video – Part 2 (instructional): 22:20 min ▪ Discussion forum

Course Discussion

Module Three has one discussion forum embedded in the self-paced course:

ELPT and Engaging Parents and Caregivers: Reflect on your experience of filling in the Early Literacy Planning Tool worksheet and delivering the planned storytime. Did you include a parent/caregiver tip? How did it go? What was challenging about it and what might you change for next time?

Additional Group Discussions and Activities

Build on the discussion in the public forum.
Whether or not your group members are posting in the public forum, it would be beneficial to revisit the challenges and successes of including a parent/caregiver tip in storytime. Ask group members:
- Did you include a parent/caregiver tip in your recent storytime? How did it go? What was challenging about it and what might you change for next time?
- If you read through the public forum, what did other providers think was challenging?

Recommended resources
Suggest that group members bring print-outs or electronic copies of:
- Early Literacy Planning Tool for Vocabulary and Background Knowledge
- Their filled-out ELPT worksheets

Vocabulary and Background Knowledge
Module Three introduces the last of the early literacy components—vocabulary and background knowledge. These are both unconstrained skills, as contrasted with the constrained skills of the previous four components.
Discuss with the group:

- Explain the difference between constrained and unconstrained skills or components.
- Background Knowledge is quite extensive, covering three aspects: conceptual thinking, content knowledge, and book/story knowledge. How do these all relate to each other and why are they so important for preparing children for later reading success?

Building the habit of intentionality
Practitioners now have the full array of components and strategies in the Early Literacy Planning Tool. They are encouraged to be building the habit of using the ELPT for intentional planning and delivery. However, it's not meant to be prescriptive or overwhelming, but to be incorporated a bit at a time until it feels comfortable and natural.
Discuss with the group:

- What has your experience been applying what you're learning about the ELPT and intentionality? How are you taking it one step at a time?
- How is using the ELPT and worksheet changing the way you plan and deliver storytimes? How are you choosing books and planning activities?
- How are you keeping storytimes fun for the children, adults, and yourself?
- What responses are you noticing in the children? In the adults?

Test your knowledge
Watch the [Interactive Reading video](#) together. You may want to watch all the way through and then discuss or start/stop and have multiple discussions as you watch.
Ask the group:

- As you watch, make notes about the strategies this provider is using and which early literacy components they relate to.
- What strategies could apply to more than one early literacy component? Let's talk about the importance of understanding the components without getting bogged down in making clear distinctions between them.

It's HOW you share books and songs that helps children develop early literacy skills.

Module Four Contents and Timing

Topic	Resources
Self-Assessment and Peer Observation	▪ Video (instructional): 17:08 min ▪ Supercharged Storytimes Self-Reflection Worksheet (DOC) ▪ Supercharged Storytimes Peer Observation Worksheet (DOC) ▪ Video - Storytime at New York Public Library (practice): 8:03 min ▪ Video – Storytime Peer Coaching (demo): 2:21 min ▪ Discussion forum
Project Outcome	▪ Video (optional) – Outcome Based Evaluation: 15:28 min ▪ Video – Part 1 (instructional): 12:11 min ▪ Project Outcome Library Stories (PDF) ▪ Building Internal Support for Project Outcome (PDF) ▪ Video – Excerpts from Supercharge Your Storytime Assessment with Project Outcome" (demo): 8:52 min ▪ Video – Part 2 (instructional): 3:34 min ▪ Video – Getting Started with Project Outcome Online Tools (demo) 3:32 min ▪ Video – Part 3 (instructional) 11:32 min ▪ How to Create a Project Outcome Survey for Supercharged Storytimes (PDF)

Course Discussion

Module Four has one discussion forum embedded in the self-paced course:

Peer Observation: Based on what you observed and wrote down in the observation worksheet about the storytime you watched at New York Public Library, how would you approach a conversation with Kristy to share your feedback?

Additional Group Discussions and Activities

Recommended resources

Suggest that group members bring print-outs or electronic copies of:
- [Supercharged Storytimes Self-Reflection Worksheet](#)
- [Supercharged Storytimes Peer Observation Worksheet](#)
- [How to Create a Project Outcome Survey for Supercharged Storytimes](#)

Debrief the self-reflection process

Many storytime providers are wary of "assessment" due to the implied judgement of their skills. Self-reflection is the least threatening place to start assessing one's own performance. It's part of the planning-delivery-assessment cycle, and it's supported by the Early Literacy Planning Tool worksheet.

Discuss with your group:

- How are you already self-reflecting? You may want to use the checklist from the Module Four Learner Guide.

How are you already self-reflecting?

- ❑ I compare my storytime to what I was expecting it would be.
- ❑ I compare myself with other storytime providers.
- ❑ I look at websites or blogs when I need ideas to improve my storytimes.
- ❑ I keep a journal about my storytimes.
- ❑ When I'm planning, I think about how to improve my next storytime.
- ❑ Afterward, I think about how my storytime went and what I could do better.
- ❑ I write reports about my storytimes.

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- How does the Early Literacy Planning Tool worksheet help you reflect (assess) before planning the next storytime? What is challenging about self-reflection?

Practice giving positive feedback

Whether or not your group members are posting in the public forum, it is beneficial to extend the discussion about giving constructive feedback to your private group. You could watch the video together or ask the group to watch on their own and bring their filled-out Peer Observation worksheets with them.

Discuss with the group:

- What were your impressions of Kristy's storytime? It's okay to speak candidly here because it may bring up opportunities to talk about how to rephrase key observations to be more supportive and less critical.
- What are your suggestions for approaching a conversation with Kristy to share your feedback?

Discuss the value of outcome-based evaluation
Project Outcome provides free tools to help libraries collect and analyze information about the impact of programs on the patrons who use them.
Discuss with your group:

- What do you see as the value to your library of collecting outcome-based evaluation data?
- Does your library collect patron impact data about your storytimes? If so, how?
- How would you convince your supervisor of the importance of this kind of assessment?

Explore the Project Outcome tool and Supercharged Storytime survey
It's a technical process to gain access to the tool and create the survey that is specifically intended to collect data about Supercharged Storytimes. If you encourage group members to try to set up Project Outcome accounts before your group discussion, you can work together to explore solutions together to any problems they encountered. Note that facilitators are not expected to have answers to tech questions.
Discuss with your group:

- How did setting up a Project Outcome account work for you?
- Were you able to create the special Supercharged Storytimes survey and add the three customized questions? Refer to the handout How to Create a Project Outcome Survey for Supercharged Storytimes.

Brainstorm tips for getting patrons to fill out the survey
Some storytime providers have expressed resistance to handing out the survey because they don't want to disrupt their storytime or they think there's no time at the end to capture parents' and caregivers' attention.
Ask the group:

- What ideas do you have to make it easy for the adults to fill out the survey?

Module Five Contents and Timing

Topic	Resources
Getting to Equity	▪ Video (instructional): 12:20 min
Discovering and Building Community Connections	▪ Video (instructional): 9:37 min ▪ Community Engagement Best Practices (PDF) ▪ Pathway to Equitable Programming (PDF) ▪ Additional Resources (PDF)
Welcoming Spaces and Collections	▪ Library Walk-through Observation Checklist (PDF) ▪ Video (instructional): 15:34 min ▪ Discussion forum ▪ Facets of Equity Engagement (PDF-optional)

Course Discussion

Module Five has one discussion forum embedded in the self-paced course:

As you reflect on Ralph Smith's call to action and the other information in this module, what equity gaps are you aware of in your service area? What "aha!" insights did you have about connecting with communities, building relationships, overcoming biases and barriers, or any other aspect of equity-related to storytimes? Please reflect and share.

Additional Group Discussions and Activities

The content of this module introduces perspectives and strategies around equity that are ripe for discussion about the possibilities appropriate to specific libraries and communities. The actual application of suggested actions and strategies is not going to be accomplished in a short timeframe; it's a long-term and ongoing process of discovery and rethinking.

Discuss Ralph Smith's call to action
Whether or not your group members are posting in the public forum, bringing this discussion to your more intimate group may trigger deeper exploration of the equity gaps and insights in the context of their libraries and communities. On the other hand, reading comments in the public forum may expose the group to meaningful perspectives from other contexts.
Discuss with the group:
  ▪ What equity gaps are you aware of in your service area? How does thinking about equity gaps as *opportunities* help you and your library address the gaps?
  ▪ What "aha!" insights did you have about connecting with communities, building relationships, overcoming biases and barriers, or any other aspect of equity related to storytimes?

Recommended resources
Suggest that group members bring print-outs or electronic copies of:

- [Learner Guide for Module Five](#)
- [Pathway to Equitable Programming](#)
- [Library Walk-through Observation Checklist](#)

Debrief the "What can I influence?" activity
Refer to the activity on page 2 of the [Learner Guide for Module Five](#)
Discuss with your group:

- What did you take away from the activity of looking at your calendar as an indicator of your priorities and potential influence in your work?
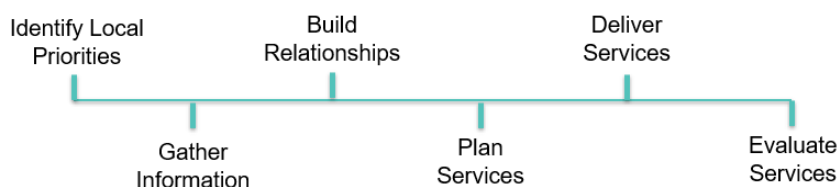- What would you like to change about the priorities for your work schedule?

Discuss the process of community engagement
Refer to the [Pathway to Equitable Programming](#) provided by CiKeithia Pugh and The Seattle Public Library.
Discuss with your group:

- After listening to Pugh talk about each step on the Pathway, what is your library doing effectively toward achieving equitable programming? Where could the approach be improved?
- How would you apply the Pathway process to your library storytimes?

Pathway to Equitable Programming

Identify Local Priorities — Build Relationships — Deliver Services

Gather Information — Plan Services — Evaluate Services

How welcoming is your library?
Ask group members to bring their filled-in [Library Walk-through Observation Checklist](#) to the discussion.
Discuss with your group:

- Let's go around the group and share one aspect of your library that is welcoming and one aspect that needs improvement.
- After listening to Pugh talk about welcoming spaces and programs, did you think differently about some of your responses on the checklist? If so, what and why?
- What items or aspects would you add to the checklist?

In closing, remind everyone that this is a long-term, sustained conversation and effort. Encourage group members to share this information with supervisors and colleagues in their library and beyond.

Module Six Contents and Timing

Topic	Resources
Growing Your Intentionality **Community of Practice**	▪ Video (instructional): 14 min ▪ CEELO Early Learning Standards or Guidelines by State (weblink) ▪ ECRR's Creating an Elevator Speech (PDF) ▪ Peer Community Resources (PDF) ▪ Video – Storytime Underground Webinar: 1 hour

Course Discussion

Module Six has two discussion forums embedded in the self-paced course:

Advocating for the Value of Storytimes and Libraries: What opportunities are you finding to advocate for the value of library storytimes? How are you fine-tuning your elevator pitch? How are you reaching the stakeholders you listed, or finding other stakeholders who have been missing from past connects?

Peer Community: How are you connecting, or plan to connect, with your storytime provider peers? Sharing your ideas and resources here is one way to connect with a growing peer community.

Additional Group Discussions and Activities

Recommended Resource
Suggest that group members bring print-outs or electronic copies of:

▪ [ECRR document: Creating an Elevator Speech](#)

Explore stakeholders and standards
Before writing an elevator speech, it's good to know who you're making the pitch to.
Discuss with your group:

▪ Who are the stakeholders in your community that you would like to connect with to discuss your library's early literacy services more directly?

▪ Think of one or two of the stakeholders as specific people. What would most impress them about your library storytimes?

▪ Consider locating your state's early learning guidelines ([CEELO early learning standards or guidelines by state](#)) and aligning those guidelines with the benefits of library storytimes.

Practice elevator speeches
Discuss with your group:

- How do library storytimes benefit children, families, and communities? Brainstorm key phrases and attention-grabbing language. (Note to facilitator: keep them focused on the outcomes, the *how* it will benefit, not the what it is.)
- Write a 2-3 sentence elevator speech about your Supercharged Storytimes or share what you've already written. Go around the group and ask each person to say their speech.

Plan on peer connections
Module Six ends with a call to connect with your community of storytime peers, whether that's local or geographically distributed. As a Learning Group, you have initiated bonds around this shared learning experience. This is the perfect opportunity to talk about keeping it going and expanding. Discuss with your group:

- How can we stay connected with each other to sustain our momentum and motivation to keep supercharging our storytimes?
- What other peer networks are you involved with, either actively or following?
- What ideas do you have for expanding your networks?
- How should we celebrate our accomplishment with this group learning experience?

Certificate of Completion
Remind group members of the requirements for obtaining a Certificate of Completion from the self-paced course:

- Watch all the key instructional videos
- Successfully complete the Storytime Strategy Quiz (learners can resubmit answers multiple times)
- Complete the Supercharged Storytimes – Storytime Practitioner Survey

**Celebrate the amazing and valuable work you do!
You enrich the lives of children, families, and communities.**