

# DISTANCE EDUCATION: Strategies & Solutions



## Learning Circles in a Virtual Environment

### What is a Learning Circle?

- Informal groups organized around a single topic or goal
- Have an online component
- Are student-centered
- Participants have shared interest or learning goal
- Take place at a predetermined time/place, for a specified period of weeks/months

### Benefits of Learning Circles

- Can be about any topic
- Need facilitator, not trained teacher or subject matter expert
- Can be easily implemented by non education organizations such as libraries
- Increased learner confidence
- Learn from/with others with the same interest
- Builds strong sense of community
- Students learn technology skills
- Brings structure/responsibility to online learning

### Things to Consider About Virtual Learning Circles

- **Orient students** to platform. Use screen sharing to provide support.
- Good way to address **wait lists**
- Important to establish **classroom norms** and **incorporate** student's **home environment**
- Encourage **peer support** and **leadership opportunities**

### Resources

#### Webinar Recording:

<https://youtu.be/fm8jUQ5INYE>

#### Webinar Resources:

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6x2u5ifds6lnjkw/AA\\_Cpj-izSmyXeAdSHRv3lw7ca?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6x2u5ifds6lnjkw/AA_Cpj-izSmyXeAdSHRv3lw7ca?dl=0)

#### Six Tips for Six Tips for Hosting Virtual English Now! Learning Circles:

<https://thewell.worlded.org/six-tips-for-hosting-virtual-english-now-learning-circles/>

#### English Now! Implementation Guide:

<https://edtech.worlded.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/English-Now-Implementation-Guide-2020.pdf>

#### Content Resources

- **Pitney Bowes Workforce Development Collection:**  
<https://proliteracyednet.org/workforce>
- **USA Learns:** <https://www.usalearns.org/>
- **VOA Learning English:**  
<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/>
- **We Speak NYC:**  
<https://wespeaknyc.cityofnewyork.us/>
- **ESL Library:** <https://esllibrary.com/>
- **Learning Upgrade:**  
<https://web.learningupgrade.com/>
- **Burlington English:**  
<https://www.burlingtonenglish.com/>
- **The Change Agent:**  
<https://changeagent.nelrc.org/>
- **Cell-Ed:** <https://www.cell-ed.com/>
- **NewsELA:** <https://newsela.com/>