

*What follows below is a redacted version of guidelines we provided to facilitators at the 2016 Leading Learning Symposium. This is a companion resource for the article "[A Why-To and How-To on a Structured Approach to Networking: Curated Connections™](#)." If you haven't already, we encourage you to read that post for a fuller appreciation of what Curated Connections are and how we used—and how you might use—these facilitator guidelines.*

## CURATED CONNECTIONS™

The Curated Connections session represents a way for attendees at the Leading Learning Symposium with shared interests to come together for informal but focused discussion. We hope they also serve as a basis for learners to stay in touch with a subset of other attendees and continue informal social learning together.

### THE ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER FACILITATOR

Like others in the group, you are there to participate and get value out of the discussion. As the facilitator, you are also there to help ensure discussion stays on topic and everyone has a chance to ask questions and receive feedback. As a facilitator, please do the following.

#### 1. Ask a group member to take notes for the group.

Please encourage group members to take their own notes (good for engagement and learning), but also appoint a specific person to take notes for the group. This person should note the challenges and opportunities raised by participants and capture any substantive feedback and actionable ideas. *We would like to post the notes from each group in the Leading Learning online community. Ask the note-taker to either write legibly and hand physical notes to [name] on the Tagoras team at the symposium or take notes digitally and e-mail those to [name] ([e-mail]) by the end of the week.*

#### 2. Ask members to stay focused on and engaged in the group discussion and refrain from side conversations.

#### 3. Ask group members to briefly introduce themselves.

Encourage group members to keep their introductions under 60 seconds. In addition to name, organization, and job role, they should state, as succinctly as possible, the specific challenge or opportunity related to the group topic they are most hoping to discuss with the group. We suggest that you introduce yourself first in order to model the type of brief introduction suggested here.

#### 4. To help the discussion flow, be prepared to do one or more of the following.

- Choose one of the issues shared during the introductions to discuss.
- If they are helpful for initiating or focusing the discussion, you may want to reference the seed questions we have provided later in this document.

- These are optional—so feel free to ignore them if they do not seem necessary for facilitating discussion in your group.
- Ask follow-up questions of participants, including asking for clarification or probing for additional information.
  - Paraphrase a participant’s comments and ask for the group’s reactions or ideas.
  - Ask open-ended questions of participants—e.g., how would this apply in your job or at your organization? What are the factors keeping you from taking action?
  - As time dictates and allows, shift the discussion to another issue by calling on other participants in the group.
  - As appropriate, re-visit comments or ideas from earlier in the discussion to connect them with comments and ideas that come up later.

**5. Be mindful of time.**

Your group will have approximately *35 minutes* for introductions and discussion. (We’ll provide verbal reminders to help you monitor time during the session.) Reserve a couple of minute at the end to summarize the key points that have been raised and identify subjects that may have been overlooked.

**FACILITATORS FOR EACH TOPIC**

During the Curated Connections, there will be time for you to participate in two rounds of discussion. As captured in the table below, we’ve assigned you to facilitate a particular topic at a particular time (either first round or second round). For the other round of discussions, you’re free to participate in whichever topic you wish.

Topic	Round 1	Round 2
Forging meaningful partnerships (with academia, corporations, and others)	[name of facilitator 1]	[name of facilitator 2]
Effective pricing practices—what’s working, what’s not	[name of facilitator 3]	[name of facilitator 4]
Achieving ROI from implementing learning technologies	[name of facilitator 5]	[name of facilitator 6]
Getting more strategic about social and informal learning	[name of facilitator 7]	[name of facilitator 8]
Identifying and capitalizing on new market opportunities	[name of facilitator 9]	[name of facilitator 10]
Better leveraging your talent pool (internal staff, volunteers, and others)	[name of facilitator 11]	[name of facilitator 12]

## SEED QUESTIONS FOR EACH TOPIC

We've provided seed questions for each topic in case they are useful for initiating or focusing the discussion. *Use of these questions is optional*—feel free to ignore the questions if they do not seem necessary for facilitating discussion in your group.

### **Forging meaningful partnerships (with academia, corporations, and others)**

- What are key criteria that should be established for identifying partners and assessing partnerships?
- What are useful measures for tracking the success of a partnership?
- How might partnerships support workforce development issues in your field or industry?

### **Effective pricing practices—what's working, what's not**

- How effective are the standard discounting practices that organizations tend to use (e.g., member discounts and early-bird rates). Does anyone have supporting data?
- To what extent have organizations found success with premium-priced products? What are some examples? What made them attractive to members/customers?
- Has anyone successfully changed pricing for one or more education products? What motivated the change? How was it communicated?

### **Achieving ROI from implementing learning technologies**

- What have you found to be the ROI for learning technologies (whether determined rigorously or intuited)?
- What metrics have you found most useful in determining ROI from learning technologies?
- Is looking at ROI at the platform level appropriate? Or should we look at the interplay of the range of learning platforms and technologies we use when talking about ROI?

### **Getting more strategic about social and informal learning**

- What key aspects of an overall business strategy would a strategy for social and informal learning need to address?
- How can social learning efforts be coordinated and managed in the context of broader social media and community efforts?
- What are meaningful—and achievable—ways to measure the impact of social and informal learning opportunities?

### **Identifying and capitalizing on new market opportunities**

- What methods have you used for identifying new market opportunities? What criteria have you used for evaluating the potential value?
- Which types of opportunities have tended to be most successful (e.g., introducing new products or targeting new customers)? Why?
- What new market opportunities might apply to all of us (e.g., any organization involved in lifelong learning, regardless of field or industry)?

**Better leveraging your talent pool (internal staff, volunteers, and others)**

- What kinds of investments are you making in development for staff and volunteers (e.g., subject matter experts)?
- What steps are you taking to attract and retain talent at your organization?
- As people in the business of lifelong learning, do we have strategic—or even ethical—call to make sure we’re investing in growing and improving the talent pool we draw on?