

CARE + POWER = CIRCLE+

A Faculty Development Course in Twelve Chapters

Facilitator slides

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Everyone is welcome. There is always room for one more.

Who this course is for

Faculty members, sessional and contract instructors, graduate students who teach, teaching assistants, and the staff who support teaching and learning. You do not need to teach social work. You need one course you can change.

What you leave with

A revised syllabus. One course, changed one sentence at a time across twelve chapters.

A portfolio of twelve changes. One small change for each chapter, with what happened when students met it.

Your own River Street. A map of the learners in your course and the practices that open a door for each of them.

A circle of colleagues. People you can call when something goes wrong with a student, before it goes wrong again.

What it asks of you

About twelve hours together, in the format that fits your institution (see Three Ways to Take the Course), about an hour of reading before each chapter, and one small change in your own course after each chapter. If a session is impossible, the circle continues without you and welcomes you back without explanation: the Life Happens Policy applies to this course too.

CIRCLE+ pedagogy

CIRCLE+ pedagogy began as the format of the Educating for Tomorrow conference series. The circle has no head of the table. Everyone in it can see everyone else. It is open, and the gap in it is a seat for the next person who arrives. The plus is the power the circle shares with the people in it.

TEACH+: the six practices

T Transparent

E Equitable

A Accessible

C Cohort-based

H Healing

+ Power shared

The Circle Agreements (1 of 2)

Everyone is welcome, and there is always room for one more. A colleague can join late, miss a session, or come back after a term away.

No student is brought into the room. We use the composite learners of the handbook and of River Street. If a real situation is needed, change enough that the student could not recognize themself.

Rank stays at the door. A chair and an instructor on contract may sit in the same circle. What is said here is not used in anybody's review.

Nobody's syllabus is reviewed without an invitation. Each person brings their own sentence to rewrite. Colleagues respond to what they are asked about.

The Circle Agreements (2 of 2)

Speak from your own teaching. Say what happened in your course, not what someone else should do.

Passing is always allowed. Silence is a way of taking part.

Access needs are asked once and met without explanation. Readings go out ahead, remote joining is offered, anything shown is captioned, and the circle keeps to time.

Tools are a choice without ranking. A colleague who drafts with AI and a colleague who does not are equal members of the circle (Chapter 18).

One circle, one shape

10 minutes. Arrive and check in. One sentence each: what happened in your teaching since last time, and what happened when students met the last change.

15 minutes. One story. Someone reads aloud a situation from the chapter's What This Looks Like in Practice section, or the River Street door named for the chapter.

25 minutes. The practice. Read the practice itself aloud, then take it through the five questions in Part 5 of the handbook.

25 minutes. Your own syllabus. Each person rewrites one sentence of their own course. Work in pairs. Read the before and the after aloud if you wish.

15 minutes. Commit and close. Each person says what they will try before next time. The timekeeper writes it down and opens the next circle with it.

Three ways to take the course

Twelve sessions of one hour. One chapter each session, weekly or at the pace the group chooses.

Six sessions of two hours. The condensed form, two chapters each session, following CARE + POWER = CIRCLE+.

One weekend, two days of six hours. Day 1: Chapters 1 to 6, Consciousness and Anchor.

The twelve chapters (1 to 6)

Chapter 1 (C: CONSCIOUSNESS). Who Is Teaching?

Chapter 2 (C: CONSCIOUSNESS). Who Is Learning? Opening the Circle.

Chapter 3 (A: ANCHOR). When Life Happens.

Chapter 4 (A: ANCHOR). Showing Up and Speaking Up.

Chapter 5 (A: ANCHOR). Expectations and Grades.

Chapter 6 (A: ANCHOR). Writing, Practice and Revision.

The twelve chapters (7 to 12)

Chapter 7 (R: ROOTS). A Course Everyone Can Reach.

Chapter 8 (R: ROOTS). What the Course Costs the People Taking It.

Chapter 9 (R: ROOTS). More Than One Way In, and Belonging Once Inside.

Chapter 10 (E: ENACT). Learning Together and Going On.

Chapter 11 (+ POWER). Clear Tasks and Shared Tools.

Chapter 12 (= CIRCLE+). Closing the Circle.

Chapter 1: Who Is Teaching?

Who is teaching, and do students know?

Chapter 1 · The work

Key component. Positionality, and a teaching philosophy students can read.

Practice. T, Transparent.

River Street door. The first in their family at university (a city campus).

In the circle. Read the Circle Agreements aloud and change any that do not fit this group. Then each person introduces themself in one sentence: who they are as a teacher, and one course they will change.

Try before next time. Draft a positionality statement of one page, and a two-sentence teaching philosophy a first-year student can read.

Portfolio entry 1. Your statement, and where in the course students will meet it.

Chapter 2: Who Is Learning? Opening the Circle

Who is in my course, and who is not yet?

Chapter 2 · The work

Key component. Knowing the learners in the circle, wherever they join from and whatever positions they hold.

Practice. All six, introduced: Transparent, Equitable, Accessible, Cohort-based, Healing, + Power shared.

In the circle. Each person names one door on River Street they recognize from their own course.

Try before next time. List every place your students learn from, including kitchens, cars, night shifts and other time zones.

Portfolio entry 2. Your list of places, and the one learner you most want to reach better this term.

Chapter 3: When Life Happens

What happens in my course when life happens?

Chapter 3 · The work

Key component. Flexibility built into the course for everyone, with no proof asked.

Practice. E, Equitable.

River Street door. The parent who studies after bedtime (an inner-city campus).

Try before next time. Write your own grace period sentence, one that asks for no proof.

Portfolio entry 3. Your sentence, and the place in the syllabus where it now lives.

Chapter 4: Showing Up and Speaking Up

What does showing up mean, how many ways are there to do it, and how do students reach me?

Chapter 4 · The work

Key component. Presence in more than one form, and communication students can count on.

Practice. E, Equitable, and T, Transparent.

River Street doors. The rural learner who drives an hour each way (rural towns and cohorts), and the quiet learner who never asks (my home campus).

Try before next time. Add one new way to take part, and write how and when students will hear back from you, in time you can keep.

Portfolio entry 4. The new way to take part, and your communication sentence.

CHAPTER 5 · A: ANCHOR

Chapter 5: Expectations and Grades

What can students expect from me, and what is a grade for?

Chapter 5 · The work

Key component. Expectations written down, and assessment that judges the thinking.

Practice. T, Transparent, and E, Equitable.

River Street door. The learner writing in an additional language (a city campus).

Try before next time. Write the instructor's commitments for your syllabus, and check one rubric: does it judge the thinking first?

Portfolio entry 5. Your commitments, and the rubric before and after.

CHAPTER 6 · A: ANCHOR

Chapter 6: Writing, Practice and Revision

Where can a first attempt be practice rather than a verdict?

Chapter 6 · The work

Key component. Assessment that teaches: clear standards, practice before it counts, and revision.

Practice. T, Transparent, and E, Equitable.

River Street doors. The learner afraid of research (caregivers and researchers in the making), and the learner who was told they do not belong at university (my home campus).

Try before next time. Choose one assignment where a first attempt will not be final, within the time you actually have to mark it.

Portfolio entry 6. The assignment, the practice step you added, and what it costs you in time.

Chapter 7: A Course Everyone Can Reach

Can every student reach the course, on the first day, at no cost, on the device they have?

Chapter 7 · The work

Key component. Accessible materials and intentional online design.

Practice. A, Accessible.

River Street doors. The learner without reliable internet (a northern city), the learner who cannot afford the books (my home campus), and the learner on any coast (the online circle).

Try before next time. Check one week of materials for cost, format and bandwidth: open each one on a phone.

Portfolio entry 7. What you found, and what you replaced.

Chapter 8: What the Course Costs the People Taking It

What does my course cost the people taking it, and how is hard content carried?

Chapter 8 · The work

Key component. Wellbeing, and hard content carried with care.

Practice. H, Healing.

River Street doors. The learner who knows the system from the inside (an inner-city campus), and the veteran or first responder (my home campus).

Try before next time. Map the workload of your heaviest week, and add notice before the hardest content in the course.

Portfolio entry 8. Your workload map, and the notice you added.

Chapter 9: More Than One Way In, and Belonging Once Inside

How many ways are there to learn and take part, and what happens when harm happens in the room?

Chapter 9 · The work

Key component. Universal design, and belonging written into the course.

Practice. A, Accessible, and C, Cohort-based.

River Street doors. The neurodivergent learner (learners the course must be built for), the learner who listens first (remote Indigenous communities), and the learner who uses a name or pronouns that differ from the record (my home campus).

Try before next time. Offer one assessment in a second format, and write what you will do when harm happens, then tell students.

Portfolio entry 9. The second format, and your sentence on harm.

CHAPTER 10 · E: ENACT

Chapter 10: Learning Together and Going On

How do students learn with each other, and how does the course help them go on after it ends?

Chapter 10 · The work

Key component. Learning with peers, and support that reaches past the last class.

Practice. C, Cohort-based.

River Street doors. The learner in a cohort (rural towns and cohorts), the group member who carries the work and the one who falls behind, and the learner who needs a reference (my home campus).

Try before next time. Add roles and one check-in to a group task, and write how students ask you for a reference.

Portfolio entry 10. Your group task before and after, and your reference sentence.

CHAPTER 11 · + POWER

Chapter 11: Clear Tasks and Shared Tools

Where do students choose, and do they know the rules of the choice?

Chapter 11 · The work

Key component. Transparent assignments, and a free choice of tools.

Practice. T, Transparent, and + Power shared.

River Street door. The learner who uses AI as an assistive tool, and the learner who chooses not to (my home campus).

Try before next time. Rewrite one assignment with its purpose, task and criteria, and write your AI statement as a choice without ranking.

Portfolio entry 11. The assignment before and after, and your AI statement.

CHAPTER 12 · = CIRCLE+

Chapter 12: Closing the Circle

What did students decide this term, what did we change, and what do I aspire to next?

Chapter 12 · The work

Key component. Student voice that changes the course, and the ideals still to reach.

Practice. + Power shared.

River Street door. The learner who disagrees with me (a city campus), and the empty seat: If Your Door Is Not on This Street.

In the circle. Each person reads one entry from their portfolio aloud. The circle names one door it will keep open together.

Try after the course. Plan one mid-course feedback round for next term, and write your own What I Aspire To list.

Portfolio entry 12. Your River Street: every learner in your course, and the practice that opens a door for each.

AFTER CHAPTER 12

Your Portfolio

Twelve changes, one course, and your own River Street

Twelve entries

Entries 1 and 2. Your positionality statement, your list of places, and the learner you most want to reach.

Entries 3 to 6. Your grace period sentence, a new way to take part, your commitments and rubric, and one first attempt that is not final.

Entries 7 to 10. Materials you replaced, your workload map and notice, a second format and your sentence on harm, and your group and reference sentences.

Entries 11 and 12. One transparent assignment, your AI statement, and your River Street.

Completing the course

You complete the course when your portfolio holds twelve entries, however many circles life allowed you to attend. A colleague who missed sessions catches up with the readings and the changes; the circle does not ask why.

Thank you

- Everyone is welcome. There is always room for one more.
- The Inclusive Teaching Handbook, the Student Edition and this guide: drokacademy.ca
- Questions and suggestions for the next edition: sasha@drokacademy.ca