

Innovate Inside the Box

Book Club Guide

George Couros with Dr. Katie Novak

USING THIS GUIDE

As you facilitate your book club, remember to incorporate the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). For example, consider offering opportunities for synchronous or asynchronous sessions, in person and/or virtual sessions, and options for participants to respond to prompts using multiple means of action and expression. Consider setting up a free course in a platform like Moodle or Canvas so you can utilize a discussion board where participants can post reflections in written form, audio, and video. Alternatively, you can use social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram or Facebook to host a book club chat (don't forget to create a hashtag for everyone to use and follow!). Although virtual is great for some, you may also want to have the option for participants to attend a traditional book club where small groups meet in person. Consider the visual pathway below as you design your book club for maximum access and engagement.

TIPS FOR FACILITATING A SUCCESSFUL BOOK CLUB



Have a designated point person for each book club option (i.e, the social media maven, the check-in person for in-person sessions, and the course manager if setting up a virtual course). This person can check in with the teams to monitor progress, provide feedback, and offer motivation to keep on reading!



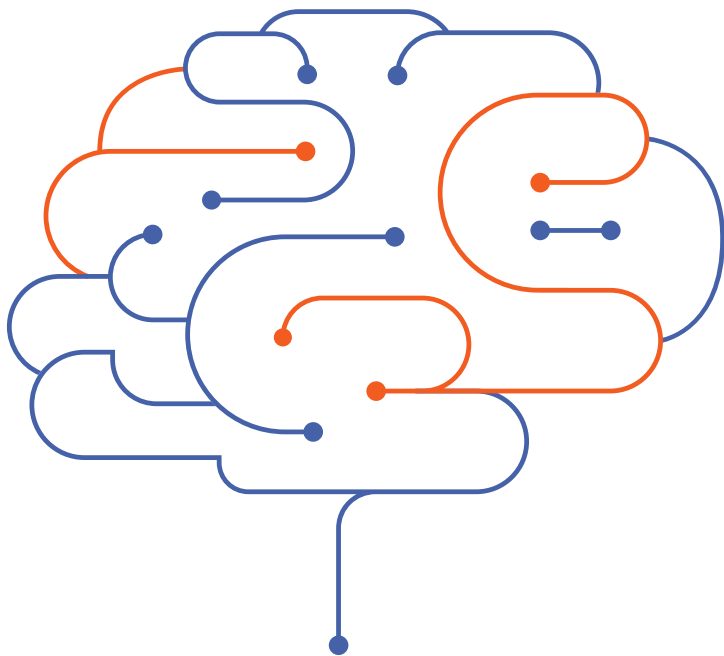
Regardless of the pathways the participants select, consider offering synchronous Zoom sessions periodically where participants can share their thoughts, questions, and "aha!" moments as they read the book.



When participants are posting online, be sure to keep the conversation going - ask questions, share resources, and make comments and provide feedback.

BOOK CLUB MODULES

This book club guide for *Innovate Inside the Box* by George Couros and Dr. Katie Novak is broken into fifteen “modules” which correspond to each chapter in the book (plus the intro!). You can determine the pace of getting through the modules based on the preferences of the group. In each module, participants read the associated chapters, consider the reflection questions at the end of the chapter, and/or choose one of the resources to further explore and put learning into practice.



GOAL

Understand how to infuse innovate within your learning environment.

OPTIONS FOR PARTICIPATING

- Host an online book group on Canvas, Moodle, or other free tool.
- Select 2-3 online tools for people to respond to weekly prompts using a hashtag.
- Offer opportunities for teams to meet in person and have discussions and then email notes.

INTRODUCTION

Educators who not only have ideas but are able to put them into action are the ones who challenge learners, reaffirm their progress and support them as they move forward.

Teachers, whether it be a librarian, custodian, a teacher at a school site or even someone not necessarily connected to education that supports a growing learner, have influenced and inspired many people who have gone on to do what we would consider great things with their lives.

We empower others through the interactions, both big and little, that we share. Our students will not always remember that lesson that we spent hours after school planning and prepping for. Instead, what they will remember is how we speak and act towards them, those micro-interactions that we do without all the prepping and planning. This introduction is not saying that the prepping and planning is unimportant or that we can forgo all those after-hours tasks. What it is saying is that the relationships we create and the positivity we spread is often remembered more than the details of a lesson that we allow ourselves to stress over. What we can do to ensure that our lessons are heard is to create strong relationships and provide empowering learning experiences to all of our learners.

Three questions should be kept in mind as you read Innovate Inside the Box:

- What has challenged you?
- What has been reaffirmed?
- What will you do moving forward?



FURTHER READING

- [In Praise of Friendship: Maya Angelou and Mrs. Flowers](#)
- [A Teacher Who Changed My Life](#)
- [Peter Woodbury School](#)



FURTHER VIEWING

- [Maya Angelou on Poetic Influences](#)
- [What is UDL with Katie Novak](#)
- [Growth Mindset vs Fixed Mindset with John Spencer](#)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Think of one educator who had an impact on you as a student in a positive way. What did they do that made an impact? I encourage you to reach out to them or share how they made a positive difference in your life.
2. Think of a challenge in your lifetime, be it personal or professional. How did you learn and grow from that experience?
3. What was a constraint you have faced in education and how did you overcome it?
4. What lessons did you learn from that process?



Part 1

The Core of Innovative Teaching & Learning

CHAPTER 1

Relationships

Positive interactions only take a few seconds and can be the best part of someone's day. How do we show others that we care? What impact does this have on others? How has the caring of others impacted us? While boundaries are important, they can still be enforced when we create positive interactions and develop strong relationships. The purpose of this chapter is to give examples of how strong relationships are built and how every interaction matters. Consider the next two questions as you read this chapter on relationships...Who was the best part of your day? How will you be the best of someone else's day?



FURTHER READING

- [This Elementary School Principal Reads Books on Facebook to Ensure her Students have a Bedtime Story](#)



FURTHER VIEWING

- [Every Kid Needs a Champion](#)
- [Rock, Paper, Scissors Competition](#)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you build relationships and know your students as individuals inside and outside of your classroom?
2. Think of two or three who influenced you as a student, either positively or negatively. How has that made an impact on you today?
3. Share a story on social media (blog or video) on a time that you saw an impact of "relationships" as a learner or teacher. Please share to [#InnovateInsideTheBox](#).

CHAPTER 2

Learner-Driven, Evidence Informed

There is a difference between being data-driven and evidence-informed. When we think of data, we think of numbers and tables of information; when we think of evidence, we include those numbers and tables and also consider ideas and thinking that has been shared, interactions that we have had, and overall growth that has been achieved. In this chapter, we provide innovative strategies that can be used to help our students see the larger purpose of learning.



FURTHER READING

- [GPAs Are Worthless](#)
- [Stop Following Your Passions...The Celebration of Work](#)
- [What Questions are Learners Asking?](#)
- [Delaying the Grade: How to Get Students to Read Feedback](#)
- [Can Focusing on Strengths Really Make a Difference?](#)



FURTHER VIEWING

- [Ryan's Family Review](#)
- [Identity Day #rscon10](#)
- [What's Your Sentence from Daniel Pink](#)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What might a wider definition of success be for your students or your community? How can you get your students involved in defining success for themselves in short- and long-term planning?
2. What evidence can be used to inform student goals and progress beyond scores? Share with others how you use this evidence to create better learning opportunities for your students.
3. How do you leverage the strengths of the learners you serve in your classroom, school, or organization?

CHAPTER 3

Creating Empowering Learning Experiences

There is a difference between engagement and empowerment. When we talk about empowering our learners, we mean that we are empowering them to develop the skills and motivation to find and solve meaningful problems. This chapter explores what it means to empower learners and gives specific examples that can be applied to your school, classroom and workplace.



FURTHER READING

- [Forbes 30 Under 30 Includes Mason Student](#)
- [Willoughby-Eastlake Schools Offers an Entrepreneurship Class to Students](#)
- [Taking Notes vs Taking Pictures of Notes; Which one Wins](#)



FURTHER VIEWING

- [A Young Scientist's Journey Towards Global Electricity Access, Maanasa Mendu](#)
- [Wendy Johnson on Curiosity](#)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If we look at what students are doing in the classroom as a sign of effectiveness of their teacher, what are some examples of things you would look for from students to signify great learning?
2. What are some examples of “empowering learning” in your classrooms for students and in your school/organization as professionals? How are you empowered as an educator, and how does that empower students in learning?
3. Curiosity and questioning are keys to empowered learning. What are some ways you can help students develop powerful questions to spark their curiosity?

CHAPTER 4

Master Learner, Master Educator

This is the last section of The Core! Here, we explain the difference between knowing and learning. Both attaining knowledge and being capable of learning are important to our success. This chapter covers the three types of learning that are crucial for educators. Throughout this chapter, you will learn ways to learn about your students, for your students and from your students.



FURTHER READING

- [No, Educators and Policymakers Shouldn't Just 'Do What the Research Shows'](#)
- [Will Richardson on Learning in School](#)
- [The First 6 Weeks: Strategies For Getting To Know Your Students](#)
- [Assuming the Best](#)
- [The Best Leaders Are Constant Learners](#)
- [Bill Gates, Warren Buffett And Oprah All Use The 5-Hour Rule](#)
- [Universal Design for Learning](#)



FURTHER VIEWING

- [School Doesn't Have to Kill Creativity](#)
- [Linda Yollis on Blog Parties](#)
- [Twitter Reflection Video](#)
 - Video linked above is from [#RCOELead](#)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Growth is essential to our work as educators. What is something you used to do as an educator that you no longer do? Why did you stop doing it?
2. In what ways do you learn about your students and how does that shift your practice?
3. Share an area where you received feedback and used it to improve. What was beneficial about the feedback and how did it spark your growth?



Part 2

The 8 Characteristics of the Innovator's Mindset

CHAPTER 5

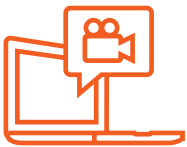
Empathetic

This is the first chapter that begins to describe the eight characteristics of an innovator's mindset. Empathy is more than simply feeling sorry, or being sympathetic, empathy is about understanding how someone else feels, recognizing their view on life and understanding what they want for their future. In this chapter, you will learn about how to create opportunities for students to develop empathy and what we can do to be more empathetic educators.



FURTHER READING

- [‘Show us you Care’: A Student’s View on what makes a Perfect Teacher](#)
- [Master This 1 Quality to Make Your Team Happier and More Productive](#)
- [Teaching Strategies: The Importance of Empathy](#)
- [Summer Language Exploration](#)



FURTHER VIEWING

- [Natalie Hampton TEDxTeen Talk: All it Takes is One](#)
- [Brené Brown on Empathy](#)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can you increase moral courage by providing students with opportunities to speak out so they experience the importance of taking action when they feel empathy?
2. How can you use Brené Brown's list of core emotions to help to create a foundation of emotional literacy and empathy in your students?
3. How can you design an assessment, like the Summer Language Exploration, where students work toward rigorous standards while also immersing in perspective-taking?

CHAPTER 6

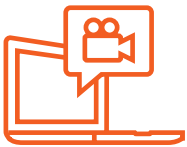
Problem Finders-Solvers

How empowering would it be to find a meaningful problem and explore ways to resolve or respond to the problem? When we care deeply about a problem, we are more likely to find a meaningful solution and enjoy the learning process. In this chapter, you will learn new ways to help your students become problem finders and problem solvers!



FURTHER READING

- [The 10 Most Inspiring Inventors Under 18](#)
- [Forget Following Your Heart – Follow Your Heartbreak](#)
- [The Pages for Peace Project](#)
- [UDL Progression Rubric](#)



FURTHER VIEWING

- [Identity Day #rscon10](#)
- [TEDx London: The Problem Finders](#)
- [Kylie Simonds – IV Backpack](#)
- [Kenneth Shinozuka TEDYouth](#)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Think of one problem that is meaningful to yourself as an educator. How can you model the practice of problem-finding to your students while solving something that is significant to your own world?
2. If you asked your students to identify the most heartbreaking aspects of school, what do you think they would say?
3. How could you design learning experiences that would help students to solve the problems that prevent them from being successful in school?

CHAPTER 7

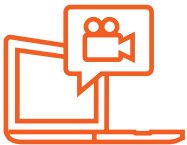
Risk Takers

We have to “jump first!” As educators, how powerful would it be if we modeled risk-taking by doing things that are new and better than what we were doing before? In this chapter, you will see examples of educators who are taking risks and removing barriers!



FURTHER READING

- [UDL Theory and Practice](#)
- [Preparing Students for Jobs that Exist Now](#)
- [Do You Keep a Failure Résumé? Here's Why You Should Start.](#)



FURTHER VIEWING

- [Girl's First Ski Jump](#)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If you knew you could not fail, what risks would you take to improve teaching and learning for all students?
2. What will you give yourself a “risk-pass” to do in order to improve teaching and learning for all students?
3. How will you “jump off the cliff” to ask for student feedback about your teaching and learning environment?

CHAPTER 8

Networked

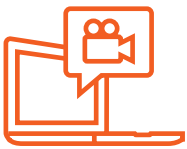
“Social media is like water. You can either let us drown or teach us to swim.” -High School Student

This quote starts off the chapter, Networked, because it speaks to the needs of our learners from a student’s perspective. How powerful is it when we can bring the ideas of our entire learning network to our school site or work place? In this chapter, you will explore ways to be a digital leader for your learners. After reading this chapter, you will have a better understanding of the positive power that being networked can have on your learning environment.



FURTHER READING

- [This Is How One Sixth Grade Girl Helped Improve Flint’s Water Crisis](#)
- [10,000+ Backpacks Filled With School Supplies to Be Distributed in Flint, MI](#)
- [Little Miss Flint’s 5 Awesome Tips for Becoming a Young Activist](#)
- [Digital Leadership Defined](#)



FURTHER VIEWING

- [Mari Copley @LittleMissFlint Twitter](#)
- [“Make Your Mess Your Message” with Mari Copley](#)
- [Susan Cain TEDTalk: The Power of Introverts](#)
- [Making Learning Personalized and Customized](#)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can you use cogen dialogues to collaborate with students about how to create more opportunities for them to work collectively and network in meaningful ways?
2. Families provide an amazing resource to foster collaboration and networking. What strategies can you implement to network with families and provide opportunities for students to learn and share the best of the people who are closest to them?
3. How can you design learning experiences that empower students to take action to create their own networks?

CHAPTER 9

Observant

With so much information and many opportunities to learn, how do we focus on being observant? How do we design learning opportunities that empower our learners without being overwhelmed with the amount of information available? In this chapter, you will learn strategies that will help you slow down, listen, find great information and make deep connections.



FURTHER READING

- [Why We Have Our Best Ideas in the Shower: The Science of Creativity](#)
- [The 13-year-old who built a best-selling lemonade brand](#)



FURTHER VIEWING

- [Me and the Bees Lemonade](#)
- [Pomodoro Technique For Productivity](#)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How will you allow students to co-design a lesson with you using their powers of observation?
2. Try the vocabulary activity yourself! Observe the world around you today and identify five words that you're unsure of. What are they? Share them with us at #InnovateInsideTheBox or with a group of your peers/colleagues.
3. How can you empower your students to build their powers of observation to identify resources that will help them meet their goals?

CHAPTER 10

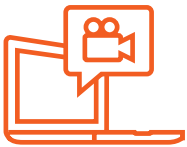
Creators

This chapter is more than just a tribute to George’s man crush on Ryan Gosling (seriously though, check out [this link](#) for a Google search to see just how serious this crush is). Read this chapter to learn more about how to provide opportunities for your learners to “meaningfully create” instead of just creating for the purpose of being a creator or instead of being solely a consumer. You will gain ideas to use today in your classroom to help your learners demonstrate what they know in non-traditional formats.



FURTHER READING

- [The Surprising Truth Behind Creating and Consuming](#)
- [Is that High Order Task really High Order?](#)
- [George’s #mancrush on Ryan Gosling](#)



FURTHER VIEWING

- [Ryan Gosling Tribute to Ryan McHenry](#)
- [The Paradox of Choice](#)
- [Brené Brown: The Power of Vulnerability](#)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can you adapt an upcoming assessment into an opportunity for students to create an authentic product? Remember to provide approximately five choices or less to inspire them.
2. How can you help students to comprehend that creativity can be learned by teaching them four strategies for building creativity?
3. How will you take action and promote creativity in your classroom using multiple means of action and expression?

CHAPTER 11

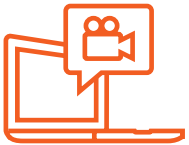
Resilient

What is the difference between failing and failure? How do we practice failing and work towards resiliency? In this chapter, you will explore ways to build a mindset of resiliency within your learning community and take away opportunities to try this out with your learners!



FURTHER READING

- [The Big Difference Between Fail-ing and Fail-ure](#)
- [High School Student Secretly Draws All 411 of His Graduating Classmates](#)



FURTHER VIEWING

- [Jim Carrey Commencement Speech](#)
- [Spanx Founder Sara Blakely On Celebrating Failures](#)
- [How Great Leaders Inspire Action](#)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What concrete strategies can you implement in your learning environment as you provide multiple means of engagement to increase student motivation and help them to embrace their why?
2. How will you incorporate more discussions on the importance of failing and “bouncing forward” with students while activating their background knowledge of coping strategies?
3. Students need models of resilience, yet many adults don’t acknowledge setbacks as opportunities for growth. How can encouraging student feedback about our teaching highlight our own struggles and help us to model resilience?

CHAPTER 12

Reflection

Have you ever had that moment when you realize exactly what you should have done or exactly what you should have said, just way after the fact? That is reflection and it helps us better prepare ourselves for the next time a similar situation arises. In this chapter, you will gain strategies that will help you and your learners “reflect and connect.”



FURTHER READING

- [The Importance of Daydreaming](#)
- [Learning Through Reflection](#)
- [5 Ways Daydreaming is Good for You](#)



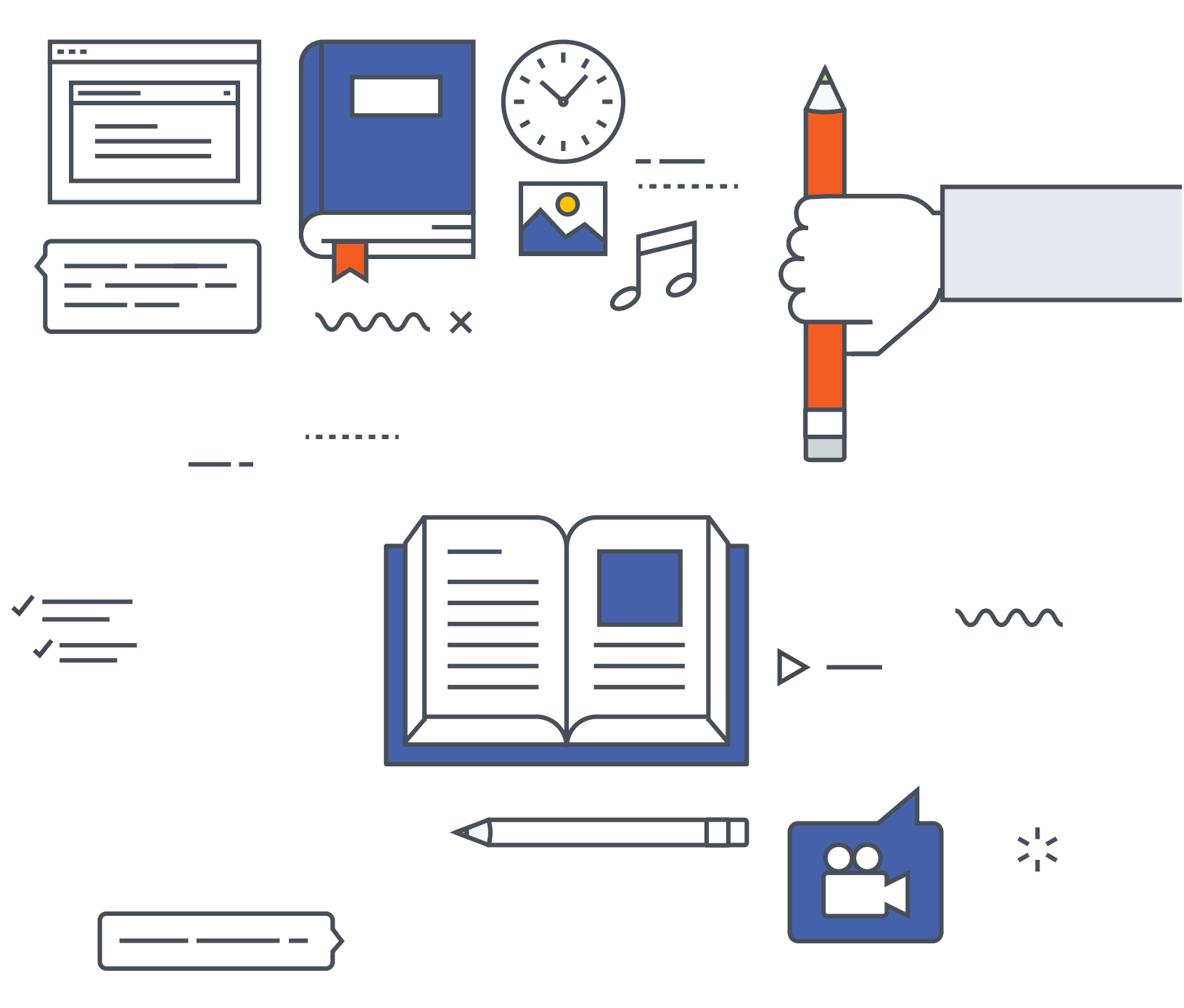
FURTHER VIEWING

- [Highlighting Mistakes: A Grading Strategy](#)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you feel guilty about as a teacher? Reflect on that and consider how to move forward. Make a plan!
2. Consider every class period a process of “choose-do-review.” How will students be accountable for meaningful reflection?
3. In what types of assessments could you “highlight mistakes” to prompt student reflection?



Part 3

Taking Ownership Over the Process of Learning

CHAPTER 13

Lead from Where You Are

Change can be hard and we have to make the choice to change. In this chapter, you will learn more about the importance of moving forward and how building relationships and understanding the journey ahead will help us as we move forward.



FURTHER READING

- [Story Telling and Brain Science: This is Your Brain on Story](#)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Identify one moment that you significantly changed your direction, personally or professionally. What happened and what change did you make because of it? Take the time to reflect and consider sharing it with colleagues.
2. What is the “story” of your classroom, school, or organization? What is the one you can tell, and what is the one you want to tell?
3. What are some of the “traditional” barriers to innovation in education, and how can you leverage them to create new and better opportunities for the learners you serve?

CHAPTER 14

You Are the Core

How would people feel if they got to see the beautiful stories about your classroom and what you do with your learners every single day? In this final chapter, we hope that you take the time to think about “your compelling reason.”



FURTHER READING

- [How Do Work Breaks Help Your Brain? 5 Surprising Answers](#)



FURTHER VIEWING

- [An Open Letter to New Teachers](#)
- [Emotional Commercial](#)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What has challenged you?
2. What has been reaffirmed?
3. What will you do moving forward?

Take some time to reflect, either privately or publicly, on these questions. The most important question of these three is the last. We would love to hear what you will do to move to action.

Share your stories. Share your failures. Reflect with us and endure.

#InnovateInsideTheBox

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