BIG THINK +

How can I run a cohort learning experience using a Big Think+ Course?

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As learning managers, our goal isn't just to deliver content - it's to design experiences that help learners change behaviors, solve real problems, and grow intentionally. Big Think+ Courses are well suited for this work, because they combine expert insights with guided exercises, structured into sequences that build skill over time.

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What Makes a Big Think+ Course Ideal for Cohorts

Each Big Think+ Course is a complete learning journey that goes beyond passive viewing and that:

- Begins with a welcome video that sets the tone and frame for learning
- Breaks content into distinct sub-topics
- Wraps each lesson with a guided exercise: missions that prompt action, or reflections that deepen thinking
- Offers optional discussions that surface peer perspectives and create shared learning
- Helps learners track progress with built-in tools and visual cues

That structure aligns naturally with a cohort experience because it creates a common path learners can follow while doing the work together.

Step 1: Begin with the end in mind

Start by clarifying the outcome that you need. Ask:

- *What is the behavior change or mindset shift that I need in my learners?*
- *What does success look like?*

Be sure to identify these key items:

- Target behavior or capability - Identify what it is that you want your learners to know, do, think, or feel differently as a result of the cohort experience. Start by clarifying the outcome that you need. Ask:
  - *What is the behavior change or mindset shift that I need in my learners?*
  - *What does success look like?*

  For example, you may need your learners to make better decisions, lead with empathy, or give more effective feedback.

> **Tip:** By adding the phrase "...as evidenced by..." you can more easily determine what success looks like and what you need to measure. As an example: "I need my sales leaders to make better decisions as evidenced by a shortened sales cycle." Oftentimes this is the observed behavior that led to someone requesting the training.

- Program success measures - Some examples are participation rate, mission completion, applied behavior changes, internal mobility and/or promotions.

- Audience - Some examples are new leaders, team managers, and cross-functional teams. It's also important to know what their skill or experience level is with a topic, as well as their attitudes overall toward it.
  - As an example, if you are introducing AI to your organization, do they know what AI is and how to use it? Are they apprehensive about it or are they generally open to new technology? Are they senior leaders who are shaping AI strategy or individual contributors who will be using AI in their day-to-day tasks? Knowing this can help you select the right Course for your learners.

- Duration - A typical cohort program can run anywhere from a few weeks to a year or more. The length you choose should match the Course's depth, your organizational rhythm, the number of topics/classes, and the amount of time your learners have time to devote.

This clarity guides how you'll pace the Course and support learners week to week.

Step 2: Choose the Right Big Think+ Course

Pick a Course that aligns tightly to your cohort outcome. Review the Course's:

- Class sequence and themes
- Balance of lessons vs. missions vs. reflections
- Total expected time commitment

Because each Course has a built-in logical progression, you can anchor your cohort around it without reinventing content sequencing.

If you're not sure which Course is best for your particular needs, reach out to your Partner Services team.

Step 3: Choose a Schedule

The heart of your cohort is the cadenced rhythm that takes learners through the experience together, invites them to apply what they're learning, and surfaces insights in community.

To do this, you'll design your cohort rhythm around your selected Course's components and the amount of time your participants have to devote to their coursework both inside and

outside of the classroom components. Be sure to allocate enough time for them to complete their pre-work prior to the classroom sessions.

> Note: The choice of hosting the live sessions as virtual or in-person may also impact your schedule due to conference room availability, cohort's physical location, time zones, and other factors.

The below example shows a potential repeatable monthly schedule for participants who have thirty minutes per week to devote to their cohort training, and where the Expert Classes have approximately one hour of Lessons to complete.

- Weekly Cohort Flow (example)
  - Weeks 1-2 - Asynchronous Pre-Work (30 mins per week)
    - Watch the first Expert Class lessons
    - Complete the linked reflections or missions
    - (Optional) Post a quick insight to a discussion board or to the Conversations tab in the BT+ platform
  - Week 3 - Live Check-In Session (30 min)
    - Brief welcome and progress reflection
    - Small-group discussion on that week's reflections and missions
    - Whole-group synthesis of themes and challenges
    - Identify next actions (missions) for the coming week
  - Week 4 - Application Week (30 min)
    - Participants complete their assigned missions in real contexts (e.g., a feedback conversation, leadership experiment)
    - Facilitation team nudges participation and shares prompts

With this flow, the Course's components become both the content and the practical work, keeping the experience anchored in action.

Step 4: Facilitate Reflection and Application

In a cohort, live sessions shouldn't simply recap video content - they should:

- Surface connections between content and learners' real work by facilitating peer-to-peer discussion and activities that create context and meaning in the content
- Make space for reflection on missions and reflections (both are where learning sticks)
- Encourage peer problem-solving and accountability
- Ask questions like:
  - *"What stood out most from this Class's missions or reflections?"*
  - *"Where did you try something new this week, and what happened?"*
  - *"What challenges are you anticipating next?"*
- Frame discussions around application, not summarization.

Additional detail is available in:

- How can I run effective online group learning discussions?

- How can I run an engaging group discussion session?
- Group Discussions: Facilitator Cheat Sheet

Step 5: Measure Impact with Learning and Work-Integrated Metrics

In addition to completion:

- Track engagement with reflections and missions and with the assessments
- Collect learner feedback on applied actions
- Survey behavior change and confidence gains
- Gather qualitative stories about how learners used insights at work

Use these signals to iterate on future cohorts.

Summary

A Big Think+ Course is more than a collection of lessons; it's a structured learning journey built for action. As you design your cohort, lean into that structure: let the sequenced lessons and Expert Classes, guided missions, and reflective exercises be the backbone of your experience. With thoughtful facilitation and a clear rhythm, you'll help learners move from insight to real, sustained change.

Email Communications

Here's a practical set of weekly email templates tailored for running a Big Think+ Course cohort. Each email aligns with the Course structure (Classes, lessons, missions, reflections, discussions) and is designed to keep learners engaged, reflective, and accountable. You can copy, customize, or automate these for your cohort.

Week 0 – Welcome Email / Pre-Cohort

Subject: Welcome to your [Course Name] Cohort!

Body:
Hi [First Name],

Welcome to our [Course Name] cohort! Over the next [X weeks], we'll explore [key outcome / skill] together. Here's what to expect:

1. Course Structure: Each week, you'll complete a Class on Big Think+ that includes short lessons, guided reflections, and missions (practical exercises).

2. Live Sessions: We'll meet weekly to share insights, discuss challenges, and plan next

steps.

3. Action-Oriented Learning: Your “missions” are your chance to apply what you learn directly to your work.

Before Week 1:

- Watch the welcome video in your Big Think+ Course
- Complete the pre-reflection question: “What’s one area of [skill/topic] you want to grow in this cohort?”
- Add your reflection to our shared [space / discussion board]

We’re excited to learn and grow together!

[Optional: Include link to first Class]

Best,
[Your Name]

Week 1 – Kickoff Email

Subject: Week 1: Start Your First Class & Reflection

Body:
Hi [First Name],

It’s time to dive into Week 1 of your [Course Name] cohort!

Your Big Think+ pre-work:

- Watch this week’s Class lessons (~20–30 min)
- Complete the mission at the end of the Class
- Reflect on the question: “Where could I try this this week?”

Live Session Reminder:

- [Date & time of your live session]
- We’ll discuss reflections, share experiences, and plan your action for the week

Tip: Try to complete your mission before the live session — it makes discussion richer!

Looking forward to seeing your insights.

[Your Name]

Week 2–5 – Weekly Reminder & Reflection Prompt

Subject: Week [X]: Your Next Class & Mission

Body:
Hi [First Name],

Week [X] is here! This week, you'll continue your journey through the [Course Name] with a focus on [Class topic].

Your pre-work:

- Watch the Class lessons
- Complete the associated mission in your work
- Post a reflection in [shared discussion space] answering:
    - "What did I try this week, and what happened?"
    - "What challenges or questions came up?"

Live Session Reminder:

- [Date & time]
- Agenda: share reflections, peer discussion, synthesize lessons, plan next mission

Remember: the best learning happens when you apply it — take your mission seriously and experiment this week!

Cheers,
[Your Name]

Week 6 – Closing & Final Reflection

Subject: Week 6: Finish Strong & Share Your Insights

Body:
Hi [First Name],

Congratulations — you're in the final week of your [Course Name] cohort!

This week:

- Watch the final Class lessons
- Complete the last mission
- Reflect on your overall growth:
    - "What's the biggest insight I gained?"
    - "Which skills will I continue to practice?"

Final Live Session:

- [Date & time]
- We'll celebrate progress, share takeaways, and discuss next steps for applying your learning

Thank you for bringing curiosity, engagement, and commitment to this cohort. Your reflections and experiments are what make this experience meaningful.

[Optional: Link to post-course survey]

Best,
[Your Name]