

Dialogue Facilitator

Trainee Workbook

TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE PEER DIALOGUE
IN PHILOSOPHY AS A WAY OF LIFE COURSES



“What is the good life, and how can we live it?”



Table of Contents

1. WELCOME TO THE PWOL TEACHING TEAM

Philosophical Snake Oil	3
Frankenstein's Adlib	4

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Email to Parents	5
Student Pitch	6
LinkedIn Entry	7
Elevator Pitch	8

6. PROFESSOR MINI-LECTURE

Listen Like A Facilitator	9
Lesson Planning	10

8. CREATING ENGAGING ACTIVITIES

Fears and Hopes in a Hat	11
--	----

9. ASKING STRONG QUESTIONS

Strengthening Weak Questions	12
Ideal Dinner Guest	14

10. DEBRIEFING

Summing it up	15
-------------------------------	----

11. ACTIVE LISTENING

Speak, Listen, Observe	16
--	----



Spot the Leader	17
Help the Rambler	18
<hr/>	
12. ACTIVE LISTENING	
Conflict Resolution Practice	19
Lesson Plan Peer Review	20
<hr/>	
14. PRACTICE DIALOGUE	
Practice Dialogue	21
<hr/>	
15. LESSON PLAN WORKSHOP	
Lesson Plan Workshop	22
<hr/>	
16. GOAL SETTING	
Goal Setting	23



1. Welcome to the PWOL Teaching Team:

Philosophical Snake Oil

Getting to know each other

Pick one word from each column to create a product which you will then pitch to a panel of investors (composed of the training leaders).

Team 1

List A	List B
Socratic	Bazooka
Dialectical	Goggles
Existential	Alcohol
Eudaimonistic	Drum
Skeptical	Parachute

Team 2

List A	List B
Utilitarian	Dumpster
Atheistic	Feather
Metaphysical	Unicorn
Momentous	Balloon
Relativistic	Mustache

Team 3

List A	List B
Theistic	Drone
Deontological	Armour
Theoretical	Gas
Sentient	Plunger
Exemplary	Camera

Team 4

List A	List B
Charitable	Wax
Irrational	Catapult
Omnipotent	Hamster
Subjective	Art
Contemplative	Puppet

Team 5

List A	List B
Supererogatory	Axe
Socially-constructed	Floss
Stoical	Lasso
Epicurean	Chicken
Unintelligible	Sculpture

Team 6

List A	List B
Nihilistic	Dolphin
Curious	Curse
Authentic	Marshmallow
Logically-invalid	Faucet
Virtuous	Baby



[Back to Top](#)

Frankenstein's Adlib

Getting to know each other

APPLICANT NAME:

ESSAY:

4. Roles and Responsibilities:

Email to Parents

Explaining your job to your parents

Compose a brief email to your parents explaining (1) your new role as a dialogue facilitator, (2) your responsibilities in this role, and (3) why the role is important for the course and for your personal or professional goals. Use the space below for brainstorming or drafting.

New Message — ↗ ✕

Recipients 🔒

Subject

Dear _____ ,

Love,

Send ▼           



Student Pitch

Explaining Your Role to Your Students

Prepare a description of your role and responsibilities that you will use in introducing yourself at your first dialogue meeting this semester. Use the space below for brainstorming or drafting.

My role this semester is to:

This involves:

My responsibilities include:

What this means for you (students) is:



LinkedIn Entry

Explaining your position to potential employers

Compose a description of your role and responsibilities as a dialogue facilitator, and why this role is important, to be used on your LinkedIn profile for potential employers to see. If you have a LinkedIn, you can work directly on your profile page. Otherwise, use this page for brainstorming and drafting.

Title *

Employment type

Company *

Headline *

Please enter a headline.

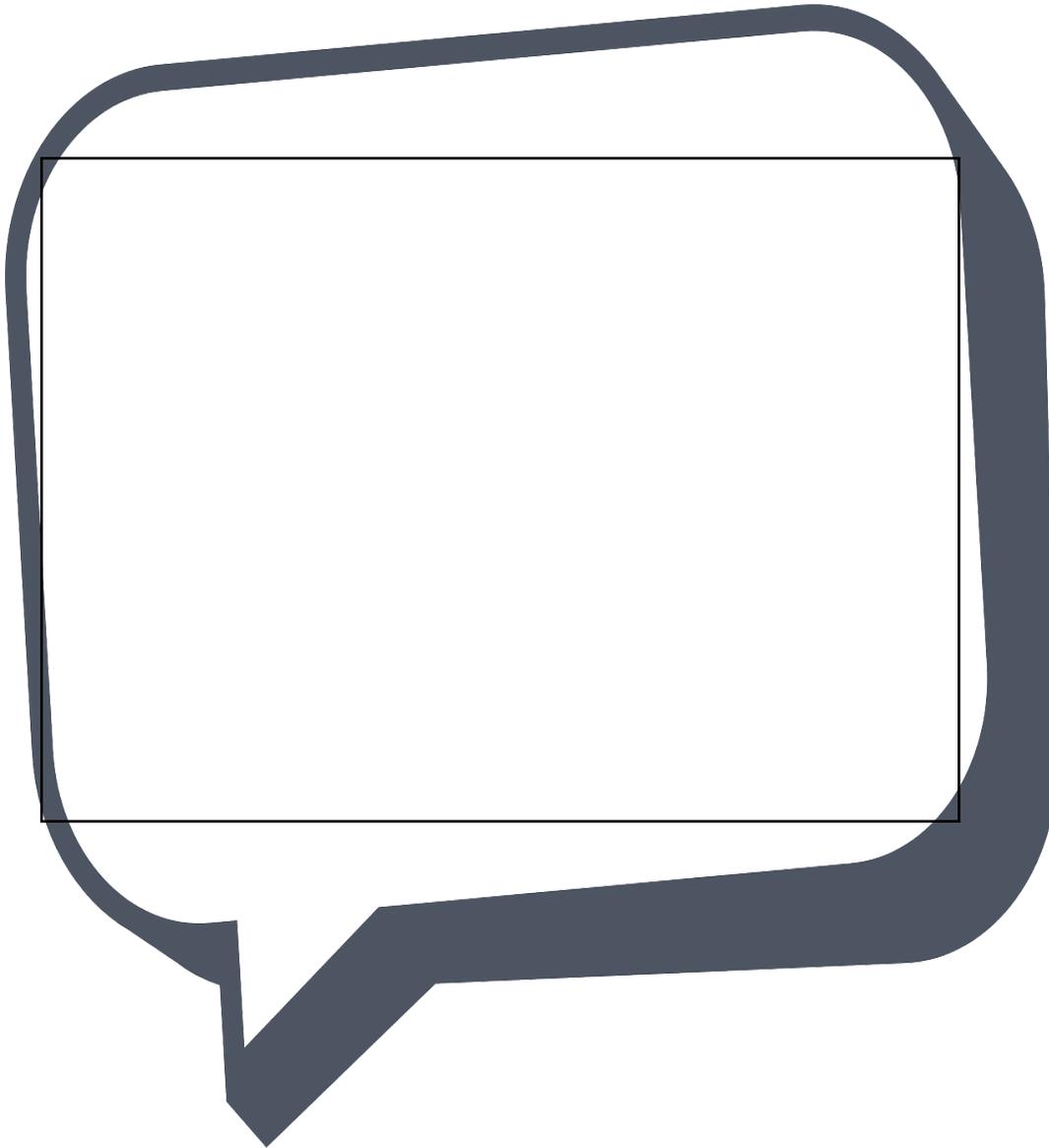
Description

Elevator Pitch

Persuading a potential employer to consider you

An elevator pitch is a succinct and persuasive sales pitch, selling a product to a potential buyer or selling your talents to a potential employer.

For this activity, prepare an elevator pitch to a potential employer identifying the skills you have gained in your employment for this course, as well as the roles and responsibilities that led you to develop these skills. This speech should be deliverable in around 30 seconds, or the time it takes to ride an elevator.

A large, dark blue speech bubble outline with a white rectangular box inside, intended for writing an elevator pitch.

6. Professor Mini-Lecture:

Listen like a Facilitator

Identifying potential topics for dialogue

As the professor gives their mini-lecture, take notes on the following questions:

1. Note any particular part(s) of this lecture that you think may be confusing or interesting to your students:

2. (a) What was the main idea of the lecture?

- (b) In what ways can this main idea connect to students' lives?

3. What are some questions that this lecture raised for you about the good life?



7-12 Lesson Planning

Creating your Week 2 Lesson Plan

My goal for this dialogue meeting:

Warm-Up / Icebreaker:

Dialogue Questions / Activity:

Debrief:

8. Creating Engaging Activities:

Fears and Hopes in a Hat

Building solidarity

Rip out this page and tear along the dotted line

My fear is:

My hope is:

9. Asking Strong Questions:

Strengthening Weak Questions

Avoiding questions that frustrate or terminate dialogue

Translate the following weak questions into strong questions while still capturing the spirit of the original weak question.

Instead of asking: “Does God exist?”

Ask:

Instead of asking: “When and where was Descartes born?”

Ask:

Instead of asking: “Are you a Kantian?”

Ask:

Instead of asking: “So like, when you’re thinking about what to do in your life, like when there’s a decision point and you’re not sure what to do, do you think about what the consequence will be, or maybe you think about the intentions behind your actions when you’re doing that, because when I make decisions I sometimes think about intentions but sometimes not?”

Ask:



[Back to Top](#)

Instead of asking: “How could you possibly think that white males are oppressed?”

Ask:

Instead of asking: “What are you talking about?”

Ask:

Ideal Dinner Guest

Facilitating dialogue without dominating or directing

During the meal break, pretend you are a dinner guest at a party and start a dialogue with your “host” or other partygoers. Do this by picking one person or a small group of 3-4 and asking them strong, dialogue-oriented questions, beginning with asking about personal anecdotes and culminating in a deeper discussion about personal beliefs. Your goal is to do all this without interjecting your own beliefs, attempting to lead your interlocutors to a particular conclusion, or creating discomfort or tension in the conversation. You will have to take turns with your partner or small group being the Ideal Dinner Guest and host or partygoers.



10. Debriefing:

Summing it Up

Where have we come and where are we going

For this activity, 5 trainees will be “Students” and 1 trainee will be the “dialogue facilitator.” The Students will take 30 seconds to prepare a single philosophical claim tangentially related to your instructor’s mini-lecture from Session 6. This claim may be one you endorse, a comment about something your instructor said, a claim of the philosophical theory the lecture was about, etc.

When the 5 Students are ready, they will take turns saying their statement in quick succession. Then, it is the dialogue facilitator’s job to tie these 5 statements together in a debrief, drawing out connections between them and identifying where the discussion may go next week based off them.

Write your statements about the mini-lecture in the space below. Prepare multiple statements in case you are asked to be a Student multiple times.

11. Active Listening:

Speak, Listen, Observe

Making everyone feel valued and heard

In a group of 3, begin by choosing who will be the first Listener, first Speaker, and first Observer. Then, a training leader will give you a question. The Speaker will speak their thoughts on this question for 1 minute, the Listener will engage in active listening with the speaker but will say nothing (besides an occasionally verbal affirmation), and the Observer will observe the Listener and give feedback on how well they did with the active listening strategies after the minute has ended. Then, switch roles and repeat!

Review the following active listening techniques before you are the Listener, and check them off when you see them while you are the Observer.

Active listening techniques:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Verbal affirmations<input type="checkbox"/> Non-verbal affirmations<input type="checkbox"/> Thank the speaker<input type="checkbox"/> Wait for the speaker to finish<input type="checkbox"/> Face the speaker<input type="checkbox"/> Lean forward<input type="checkbox"/> Make and maintain eye contact<input type="checkbox"/> Open, relaxed posture<input type="checkbox"/> Pay attention to speaker's body language<input type="checkbox"/> Mirror the emotions of the speaker	Notes:
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Spot the Leader

Paying attention to body language

Stand in a circle. One person will be selected as the Guesser and leave the room. Then, one of the remaining people will be selected to be the Leader. The Leader will then make a repeated motion or sound with their body, and everyone else in the circle will follow suit. Once everyone is doing the first motion or sound, the Guesser is instructed to come back in and stand in the center of the circle. The Guesser has 3 guesses to correctly spot the Leader. The Leader should change or add to the motion or sound periodically (when the Guesser isn't looking!), and everyone else must immediately follow suit. The Leader then becomes the next Guesser, leaves the room, and a new Leader is chosen.



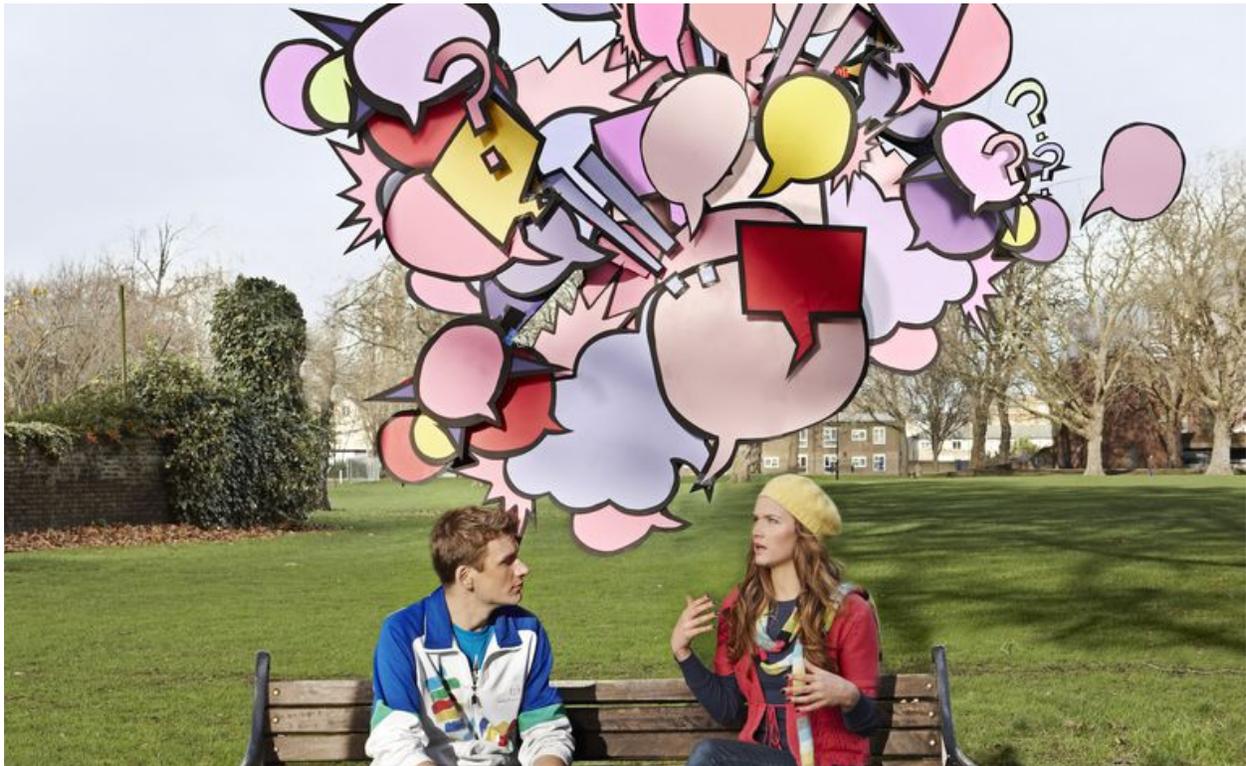
Help the Rambler

Summarize what was said

One of the best skills a facilitator can have is being able to summarize what a participant is saying in a clear and concise way so that other participants know how to respond, but this takes excellent active listening skills. We will practice this skill in this activity.

Reflect for 1 minute and choose a particular topic you can ramble or rant about for 45 seconds.

When it is your turn to be the Facilitator, listen to the Rambler carefully, then say “So what I hear you saying is…” and summarize the rambler’s thoughts in exactly one sentence.



12. Conflict Resolution and Prevention:

Conflict Resolution Practice

Preparing for potential confrontations

With a group of 2-3, prepare a 15-30 second skit as if you are students instigating a particular conflict that might come up during dialogue. Once all groups have prepared a skit, you will have a chance to participate in two scenes: in one, you will be “students” performing your skit, and another trainee will act as a “dialogue facilitator” responding to the conflict. In the other, you will be the dialogue facilitator and have to respond to a conflict acted out by 2-3 other trainees.

Potential Conflict Scenarios:

1. A group member frequently stays silent for the entire meeting.
2. A group member shoots down another person’s idea without letting them explain.
3. A group member says “Oh, here we go again,” when someone tries to share a view or a personal story.
4. A group member generalizes about an entire group of people.
5. A group member rambles, interrupts, or otherwise tries to dominant the conversation.
6. A group member frequently refuses to share anything too personal or below the surface level.
7. Two group members are arguing back and forth with each other, ignoring everyone else.
8. Multiple group members appear to get extremely worked up and emotional about something.
9. A group member says “I don’t see color” when referring to race relations.
10. A group member brings in outside facts and statistics that cannot be verified during the dialogue.
11. A group member says to another, “I’m so glad you’re not like one of *THEM*.”
12. A group member says to another, “You look so nice in that. You should wear dresses more often.”
13. A group member is on their phone constantly.
14. A group member clearly and obviously misinterprets the text.
15. A group member strawman’s another member’s view (they argue against a version of the other person’s view that isn’t actually what that person said).

13. Lesson Plan Revisions

Lesson Plan Peer Review

Helping each other grow

Tear out your Week 2 Lesson Plan and trade with a partner. Use this sheet to review their lesson plan, then discuss.

As people enter:

- Are they doing something to create a welcoming environment the second their students step into the room?

Icebreaker/Activity:

- What is the purpose of their icebreaker?

- Imagine doing their icebreaker/activity yourself: Are all the necessary rules of the icebreakers and activities made explicit?
- Is the length of time they've estimated it will take appropriate?

Dialogue Questions:

- Are their first questions more narrowly focused, perhaps on participants' personal experiences?
- Have they anticipated possible routes the conversation could go and prepared for them?
- Are most/all of their questions open-ended, requiring more than a simple yes or no or statement of fact?
- ★ How could they improve one/multiple of their questions?

Debrief:

- Do they plan to discuss any major upcoming deadlines?
- What appears to be the main goal of their dialogue meeting?

- Do participants have space, in the debrief or in a post-dialogue survey, to give feedback on how the dialogue went for them?

14. Practice Dialogue

Putting it all in practice

In this session, you will participate in a dialogue run by your fellow trainees, and perhaps have a chance to run a portion of it as well. Using the lesson plans you all just prepared, you all will take turns running a 10 minute portion of a dialogue as if it were an actual dialogue meeting with your students, beginning with a warm-up/icebreaker, transitioning into a dialogue and/or activity, and closing with a debrief.



15. Lesson Plan Workshop

Helping each other grow

In this session, you will go over your entire lesson plan with a small group and one training leader, and solicit questions, comments, and concerns from them regarding how to improve your lesson plan.

Use the space below for note taking, or take notes on your lesson plan on page 15.



16. Goal Setting

Clarifying your purpose here

My personal and professional goals for this position are:

This goal is: Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant Timely

This goal is: Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant Timely

This goal is: Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant Timely

My goals for my dialogue group this semester are:

This goal is: Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant Timely

This goal is: Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant Timely