

# Discussion Dashboard and Discussion Troubleshooter

## *How to Use*



The Discussion Dashboard and Troubleshooter are intended to make it easier to run Philosophy discussions.

The **Discussion Dashboard** is the document you would have in front of you for note-taking during an enquiry.

Next is the **Discussion Troubleshooter** which you can use after an enquiry to identify the development needs of your class.

Pages 4 and 5 are **explanations** of how to use those two documents.

We explain and demonstrate all of the Facilitation Moves and Community Builders, in quick easy to follow videos at:

[www.thephilosophyman.com/discussion-dashboard](http://www.thephilosophyman.com/discussion-dashboard)

Lastly, there's a **glossary** of all the community builders, facilitation moves and some other terms.

Don't forget to sit outside the circle and make your eyes unavailable by focusing on the dashboard!

Enjoy!

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## Coach Questions:

So, [repeat the enquiry question]?

Can you tell me more?

Can you say why?

Can you give me an example?

How do you mean?

How could you disagree with yourself?

## Facilitation Moves:

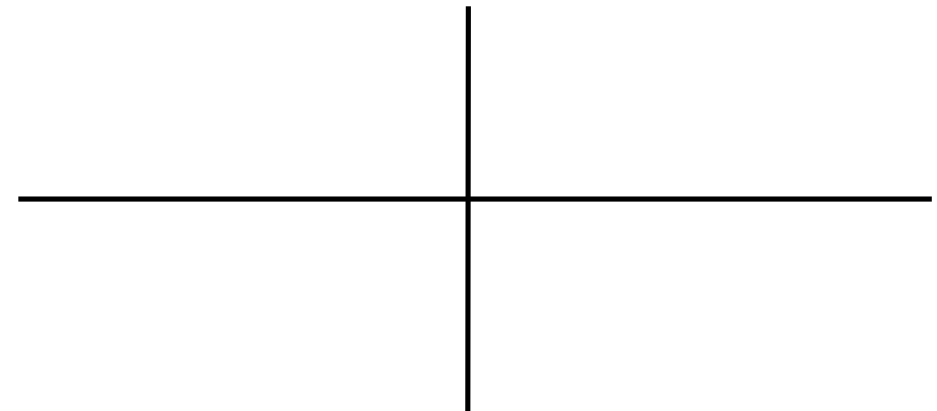
To insert more energy	BACK INTO PAIRS	TWO CIRCLES	DIVIDING LINE	VOTE WITH YOUR FEET
To stop some children dominating	FAMOUS LAST WORDS	FACILITATOR / FACILITATEE	PAIRS THEN PARROTS	LISTENERS' ROUND
Go into greater depth	YOU SAID, I THINK	SPECIFIC TO GENERAL	BOIL IT DOWN TO ONE WORD	SAY IT IN SEVEN WORDS
If everyone's agreeing...	EMPTY CHAIR	BRAINSTAND	CAT AMONG THE PIGEONS	ASK TO JOIN THE CIRCLE

## Things to look out for:

FOCUS EXAMPLE:

REACTION MOMENT:

KEY PROPOSALS:



PRINCIPLES:

EMERGING QUESTIONS:

**TROUBLESHOOTER** - Use these "What Ifs" to choose **community builders** (above, italics)) and **facilitator moves** (below) for next time.

<i>POINTING AT STUFF</i> Enquiry lacks energy? BACK INTO PAIRS	<i>WHAT ARE YOU DOING?</i> Some who talk in pairs don't talk in whole group? TWO CIRCLES	<i>YES, BUT...</i> Lack of disagreement? DIVIDING LINE	<i>WHICH AND WHY?</i> Enquiry wanders without focus on specific answers? VOTE WITH YOUR FEET
<i>PING PONG PROVERBS</i> One person dominates? FAMOUS LAST WORDS	<i>FLIP, FLOP</i> Do they settle quickly on with their first ideas? BRAIN STAND	<i>STAND AND DELIVER</i> Someone has good ideas, too shy to share them? PAIRS THEN PARROTS	<i>ZIP, ZAP, ZOP</i> A group of speakers dominate? LISTENERS' ROUND
<i>YOU SAID, I THINK</i> Not responding to each other? YOU SAID, I THINK	<i>CONNECTIONS</i> Talk gets stuck in examples, doesn't move to principles? SPECIFIC to GENERAL	<i>BOX OF ALL IDEAS</i> Lacks conceptual thought? BOIL IT DOWN TO ONE WORD	<i>SEVEN-WORD BLURBS</i> People waffling vaguely? SAY IT IN SEVEN WORDS
<i>SHOES</i> Lack of empathy/narrow perspectives? EMPTY CHAIR	<i>WHY, WHY, WHY?</i> Don't support or develop their answers? FACILITATOR FACILITATEE	<i>THIS IS NOT A SPOON</i> Points are samey and predictable? CAT AMONG THE PIGEONS	<i>SWAP PLACES IF...</i> Enquiry is detached, impersonal? ASK TO JOIN THE CIRCLE

## COACH QUESTIONS

These generic questions, which you can direct at an individual or at the whole group, push their thinking deeper and prevent you inserting your own. An excellent experiment is to aim to use just these questions as your only interventions during an enquiry. Write the current question in over the greyed out "..... repeat the question"

### COACH QUESTIONS

So, [repeat the enquiry question]?  
Can you tell me more?  
Can you say why?  
Can you give me an example?  
How do you mean?  
Why is that important?

### FACILITATOR MOVES

BACK INTO PAIRS	TWO CIRCLES	DIVIDING LINE	VOTE WITH YOUR FEET
FAMOUS LAST WORDS	BRAIN STAND	PAIRS THEN PARROTS	LISTENERS' ROUND
THE GREYEST EXAMPLE	SPECIFIC TO GENERAL	BOIL IT DOWN TO ONE WORD	SAY IT IN SEVEN WORDS
EMPTY CHAIR	FACILITATOR FACILITATEE	CAT AMONG THE PIGEONS	ASK TO JOIN THE CIRCLE

### SECRETARY NOTES

FOCUS EXAMPLE

REACTION MOMENT

KEY PROPOSALS

PRINCIPLES

EMERGING QUESTIONS

ENQUIRY DASHBOARD – © Jason Buckley 2017 - [www.thephilosophyman.com](http://www.thephilosophyman.com)

## SECRETARY NOTES

Recording key features of the enquiry allows you to reflect back key ideas to the group. It also gives you a job to do that involves looking away from the participants. When your gaze is unavailable, they must look to one another for approval rather than to you.

### FOCUS EXAMPLE

Listen out for a specific example that could provide a focus for the enquiry, or a point to return to test new insights – preferably one that divides opinion..

### REACTION MOMENT

Sometimes, a participant will say something and there is an immediate ripple of reaction – an “ooh” or everyone starting to talk in pairs unprompted.

### KEY PROPOSALS

It helps to focus discussion on four or fewer proposed answers to the question or lines of justification, or you may run out of time for critical thinking

### PRINCIPLES

If someone makes a clear statement of principle that lifts the discussion from the specific examples to a more conceptual level, capture it here.

### EMERGING QUESTIONS

Listen out for questions that are either posed by participants or that you can formulate based on statements or problems that have captured the interests of the group. You might reflect one of these back to the group to make the new focus explicit.

## FACILITATOR MOVES

These are choices you can make during an enquiry to change tempo or deepen the thinking. The first two rows are about the quantity and distribution of talk around the group, the second two rows are about the quality of reasoning. Don't use too many in a single enquiry

ENQUIRY TROUBLESHOOTER – FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

**First,** informed by their own reflections if time allows, use the diagnostic questions in the troubleshooter to identify how the community of enquiry could improve next time, circling your/their priorities.

**Second,** look up the suggested *COMMUNITY BUILDER* above the diagnostic question in the glossary and see if it would be suitable for your group as a brief activity before the next enquiry.

ENQUIRY TROUBLESHOOTER - Use these questions to choose community builders (above, *italics*) and facilitation moves (below) for next time.

POINTING AT STUFF Enquiry lacks energy? <b>BACK INTO PAIRS</b>	<b>WHAT ARE YOU DOING?</b> Some who talk in pairs don't talk in whole group? <b>TWO CIRCLES</b>	YES, BUT... Lack of disagreement? <b>DIVIDING LINE</b>	WHICH AND WHY? Enquiry wanders without focus on specific answers. <b>VOTE WITH YOUR FEET</b>
WORD AT A TIME PROVERBS One person dominates? <b>FAMOUS LAST WORDS</b>	SWAP SIDES IN WARM-UP Qs Do they settle quickly on with their first ideas? <b>BRAIN STAND</b>	STAND AND DELIVER Someone has good ideas, too shy to share them? <b>PAIRS THEN PARROTS</b>	ZIP, ZAP, ZOP A group of speakers dominate? <b>LISTENERS' ROUND</b>
MIND MELD Tendency to sensational examples?	CONNECTIONS Talk gets stuck in examples, doesn't move to principles?	<b>BOX OF ALL IDEAS</b> Lacks conceptual thought? <b>BOIL IT DOWN TO ONE WORD</b>	SEVEN-WORD BLURBS People waffling vaguely? <b>SAY IT IN SEVEN WORDS</b>

**HOST MOVES**

BACK INTO PAIRS	TWO CIRCLES	DIVIDING LINE	VOTE WITH YOUR FEET
FAMOUS LAST WORDS	BRAIN STAND	PAIRS THEN PARROTS	LISTENERS' ROUND
THE GREYEST EXAMPLE	SPECIFIC TO GENERAL	<b>BOIL IT DOWN TO ONE WORD</b>	SAY IT IN SEVEN WORDS
EMPTY CHAIR	FACILITATOR FACILITATEE	CAT AMONG THE PIGEONS	ASK TO JOIN THE CIRCLE

**BOX OF ALL IDEAS**  
Lacks conceptual thought?  
**BOIL IT DOWN TO ONE WORD**

**Finally,** on the dashboard for the next enquiry, circle any facilitation strategies you plan to use if an appropriate opportunity arises. The grids match up.

**Third,** do the same for the facilitation move suggested below the question. This is a strategy you could plan to use next time if the issue recurs.

## GLOSSARY

Italicised titles are Community Builders which you could use before an enquiry. The others are facilitation moves for use during an enquiry, or explanations of other terms on the Enquiry Dashboard.

### ASK TO JOIN THE CIRCLE

A strategy to use very sparingly, in which you stand and put up your thumb and wait for someone to invite you to join the enquiry as a participant, rather than as facilitator. Use only when momentum is lacking and you have a real-world example that might provide a helpful focus, when there is some important factual misconception to be corrected (e.g. "The UK doesn't have a president. It's a parliamentary system")

### BACK INTO PAIRS

The simplest and most effective way to inject new energy into an enquiry.

### BOIL IT DOWN TO ONE WORD

Ask them to take their strongest reason for their thinking and sum it up in one word.

### ***BOX OF ALL IDEAS***

In pairs, standing, one person reaches into an imaginary box in front of them and "pulls out" as many concepts as they can – demonstrate it yourself, e.g. "Fairness! Catholicism! Anger! Complexity! Weirdness!..." The second person in each pair enthusiastically encourages the person pulling out the ideas.

### BRAIN STAND

In a Dividing Line game, have people swap sides and argue the opposite. Or ask everyone to stand up, walk around in the space of the circle, and that when you ask them to sit down again, they will think of reasons for the opposite of what they were just arguing.

### CAT AMONG THE PIGEONS

Either pretending it to be your own opinion, or asking "What would you say to someone who.." and state a contrarian or outrageous position to push the group to justify their consensus.

### COACH QUESTIONS

These questions force facilitators to avoid putting their own thinking into the enquiry, because they are not specific to any particular content. An excellent way to train yourself is to aim to use all and only these six questions as your interventions during an enquiry, each one just once.

### **CONNECTIONS**

Go round in a circle, each person saying a word that they think has no connection to the previous word. Anyone can step forward and challenge, by pointing out a connection between the two words. People can't make the same connection twice, and playing the game with style is about making specific and creative connections.

### **DIVIDING LINE**

Where a question has just two possible answers, you can get people to take physical sides, standing on one side or other of the enquiry space, to show which side of the argument they are on. They are then ideally positioned for a lively discussion back and forth. Consider doing this in pairs if numbers turn out to be roughly even.

### **EMERGING QUESTIONS**

Listen out for questions that are either posed by participants or that you can formulate based on statements or problems that have captured the interests of the group. You might reflect one of these back to the group to make the new focus explicit.

### **EMPTY CHAIR**

Sometimes, a group will lack the diversity of perspectives needed for a reasonable treatment of a particular question. You might then place an empty chair in the centre of the enquiry space, and ask what voice has been missing from the enquiry, and who should be in the empty chair to supply it. They might then role-play their speculations about what such a person would say. Of course, making assumptions about other people's thinking has its own problems, but it may be better than their perspectives being completely ignored.

### **FACILITATOR FACILITATEE**

Put up a slide of the six coach questions. In pairs, one participant continues to answer the enquiry's question, while the other facilitates using coach questions only to push the thinking deeper.

### **FACILITATOR MOVES**

These are choices you can make during an enquiry to change the tempo or deepen the thinking, but without putting your own thoughts in there. The first two rows are largely about the quantity and distribution of talk, the second two rows are about the quality of reasoning.

### **FAMOUS LAST WORDS**

Thank a participant who has been dominating for their contribution, but ask, "Could you stay shtum (or other friendly way of saying, "Don't talk") for now, and we'll come to you at the very end for Famous Last Words – you'll be the final person to speak and can sum up what's been said, or put your own view."

### FOCUS EXAMPLE

Listen out for a specific example that could provide a focus for the enquiry, or a point to return to test new insights. A pushover example where everyone agrees on the best answer is in that situation is of little help. What you need is a...

### GREYEST EXAMPLE

In this facilitation move, you ask for an example where people are not sure what to think. This will often be because two competing concepts, principles or understandings are in conflict, providing rich ground for discussion.

### KEY PROPOSALS

It is helpful to focus discussion around no more than four proposed answers to the question or lines of justification for the answers given, otherwise you can run out of time for critical thinking about which proposals stand up to scrutiny. You might do a "vote with your feet" with the proposals once they have emerged.

### LISTENERS' ROUND

Ask those who have already spoken in the whole group talk to stay quiet, while you go round the circle and those who have been listening are invited to speak. They can still pass (but don't advertise this fact). Often, people who have things to say but do not have an urgent need to push themselves into the discussion will make useful and fresh contributions when you mix some "assumed" speaking into opt-in speaking.

### ***YOU SAY, I THINK***

In paired discussion, each person has to begin each of their points with "You said..." (giving a summary of what the other person just said), followed by "I think...." (giving their response). It's a simple way of making paired discussions responsive.

### PAIRS THEN PARROTS

Talk in pairs, then ask people to report back on what their partner said. Start with the partner of a shyer contributor, so that their voice can be heard via their "parrot".

### ***PING PONG PROVERBS***

Going round one word at a time around the circle, starting with "Always", "Sometimes" or "Never", create gems of improvised wisdom. At the end of a proverb, someone will say, "Full stop," and the whole group then scratch their chins and say, "Hmmm."

### ***POINTING AT STUFF***



In the first round, players walk around the room pointing at things and declaring loudly what they are. Demonstrate - "Ceiling! Floor! Girl! Boy!" etc.

In the second round, they point at things and say the name of the last thing they pointed at – so if it were the same sequence of objects, "[silence] Ceiling! Floor! Girl!"

In the third round, they point at things and say what they are not, for example, "Antelope! Simon Cowell! Peru!"

Ask participants to come up with their own rules for an extra round. It's a very quick game but delightfully disorientating.

### PRINCIPLES

Sometimes someone will make clear statement of principle that lifts the discussion from the specific examples to a more conceptual level. Capturing these and inviting the group to agree or disagree with them helps improve the depth of the thinking, especially when two plausible principles oppose one another. "When" and "if" often signal the formulation of a principle.

### REACTION MOMENT

Sometimes, a participant will say something and there is an immediate ripple of reaction – an "ooh" or everyone starting to talk in pairs unprompted. Make a note of such a moment as it may be a good provocation to return to.

### SAY IT IN SEVEN WORDS

Talk in pairs about your present thoughts on the question, and prepare to share them in exactly seven words. This artificial constraint can create creative and pithy phrasing.

### SECRETARY NOTES

Recording key features of the enquiry has two main functions: it provides a record which you may use to reflect back key ideas to them for further exploration, and it gives you a job to do that involves looking away from the participants. When your gaze is unavailable, they have to look to one another for approval rather than to you. It also improves your listening, as you are more focused on what is actually being said and less on engaging with the speaker.

### ***SEVEN-WORD BLURBS***

Summarise a famous story in exactly seven words so that others can guess the title.

### ***SHOES***

Split the group into four groups, each of which "stands in the shoes" of a character from a famous story. Get them to think how the other characters look from their point of view, and then to share those ideas. E.g. How does the third little pig look to

the wolf? Can also be done with real world situations with rival perspectives, but better to familiarize people with the game through a well-known story first.

#### **SPECIFIC to GENERAL**

If lots of examples have been offered but the thinking is staying shallow, ask for the similarities between those stories. How could you describe their shared features without using any of the identifying words of each story (such as names, locations)?

#### ***STAND AND DELIVER***

A game from John Cremer of The Maydays. In pairs or threes, people stand still as if they have just finished a performance, while the rest of the group applaud massively. They are not allowed to move until the applause has finished. Any other form of being the centre of attention is much more comfortable than this!

#### **SWAP PLACES IF...**

Everyone stands up. Start with some light and trivial things so that everyone has moved at least once, e.g. "Swap places if you think Justin Bieber is over-rated." Then move on to things that require people to share something about their beliefs, e.g. "Swap places if you think religion is on the whole a force for good."; "Swap places if you think one day everybody will be vegetarian."

#### **FLIP/FLOP**

If you're doing "Starting Positions", or anything where people are arguing from assigned positions as a warm up, get people to change sides half way through the argument, so they have to think nimbly "against" themselves.

#### ***THIS IS NOT A SPOON***

Pass a spoon around the circle, demonstrating first of all that, "This is not a spoon. It is an extendible nose," or whatever else you wish it to be. Each person comes up with their own statement, and demonstration of what the spoon really is.

#### **TWO CIRCLES**

Some people who are happy to talk in pairs feel over-exposed in a whole-class group, so give them the opportunity to speak to a group of intermediate size by splitting the group in half for part of the enquiry.

#### **VOTE WITH YOUR FEET**

Ask a question and spread out the possible answers, each on a separate page, on the floor. Players go and stand by their chosen answer. This is a good way to use the "Key Proposals" you have gathered on your Enquiry Dashboard.

#### ***WHAT ARE YOU DOING***

Demonstrate with a volunteer. You start miming something, for example playing chess. Prompt your partner to ask, "What are you doing?" You then say something

completely different, for example, "Feeding a giraffe". Your partner starts feeding a giraffe, you ask "What are you doing?", they reply with a different activity again, and so it continues, with each of you always miming something until you have asked, "What are you doing?" and received a new activity to copy. See [www.improvincyclopedia.org](http://www.improvincyclopedia.org) for many more excellent games such as this.

### ***WHICH AND WHY?***

A light, rapid, reason-giving game. Have three options, each with an indicated zone for people to stand in if that's their preference. E.g. "Football, rugby, or cricket?" People make a snap decision and then have to give a snap reason for their choice (can't repeat previous reasons). The choices can be outlandish, such as, "Be reincarnated as a blender, a toaster or a washing machine".

### ***WHY, WHY, WHY***

Drill deeply into the causes of a something. One person says something they believe, and the other asks 'Why?' and hears their response. The listener says 'Why?' again, to hear the response, and keeps saying 'Why?' to every response until the speaker can explain their reasoning no longer.

Populist leaders are increasing around the world.

Because of unregulated social media

Because broadcast regulators are not up to date with new developments

Because they are run by old people

Because it takes a long time to reach the top of a government organization...

And so on.

### ***YES, BUT...***

It's best to quickly demonstrate "yes, and..." first. In pairs, one person makes a suggestion for something to do. Their partner builds enthusiastically on their suggestion by saying, "Yes, and..." and so it continues, for example:

"Let's go to the beach!"

"Yes, and let's build a sandcastle!"

"Yes, and let's make it big enough to use as a hotel!"

"Yes, and let's use the money we make to start a chain of sand hotels!"

"Yes, but..." works in the same way except that the second person keeps rejecting the idea, and the first person persists in arguing for it.

"Let's go fishing!"

"Yes, but fish are rather smelly!"

"Yes, but not when they're fresh!"

"Yes, but it's still cruel."

"Yes, but they're not mammals so it doesn't really matter."

"Yes, but that's being fishist," and so on.

### ***ZIP, ZAP, ZOP***

In a circle, you start and pass a "zip" round by pointing with one hand. After the zip has gone round once, introduce "zap" which bounces a "zip" back in the other direction, then "zop" which sends it across the circle, "zep" which bounces back a "zop", and "zup" which means everyone changes places.

You can zip, zap, zop or zup a zip.

You can zip, zop or zup a zap.

You can zip, zep or zup a zop.

You can zip or zup a zep.

If you zup, you also need to zip or zop after everyone has changed places.

You can zap a zap, zep a zep, zop a zop or zup a zup.

In advanced play, you can also zeep (zip but miss one person) or zoop (zap but miss one person). Or have two zips going round at once.

Any time someone messes up, everyone spins round once and carries on. The aim is to play the game fast enough that people fail repeatedly, joyfully and together.

Just giving the group the instructions for this game and leaving them to work it out is a challenge of its own!