



Learning Unit 9: DIALOGUE AND ARGUMENTATION SKILLS

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Target public

- Teachers
- Educators
- Youth workers working with children or young people who are immigrants/come from a different background/ do not speak the local language.

Competencies to be acquired

1. The learner will have a basic understanding of dialogue skills and argumentation.
2. Introduction to active listening principles



DIALOGUE

What is Dialogue?

Dialogue is a **form of conversation where people genuinely try to access different perspectives to enable a new understanding to emerge.**

Unlike debate, dialogue seeks to discover a new meaning that was not previously held by any of the participants in the dialogue.



Basic Rules

1. **Build your vocabulary by reading and using a dictionary.**

Read: by reading you can become more aware of words because you encounter yourself with all types of words, and many of them can be unknown. You should read things that you find interesting, in this way you will not get easily distracted.

Use a Dictionary: have your own dictionary always nearby, this way if you encounter yourself with an unknown word, you can look it up immediately, if not you might forget about it. Always try to mark the words you have looked up, in order to remind yourself you already know what it is about.

2. **Learn to listen.** The quality of our listening can determine the quality of our contribution to dialogue. It is a real challenge to listen well. It requires keeping an open mind and really hearing what the other person's experience is. It is a challenge because our minds are sense-making machines, and we tend to make sense by comparing what we see and hear to what we have seen and heard in the past.



Basic Rules

3. Learn to advocate. This is about putting across one's views. There is an art to doing this constructively in a dialogue environment:

- Acknowledge other's maps – in other words, their way of seeing things, their beliefs and values
- Offer, rather than impose your thinking and views
- Discriminate between fact and opinion – when you are sharing, make it clear which is which.

4. Learn to inquire. This is about exploring one's own and others' mental maps, of understanding more than you can see, and seeing through other's eyes. Essential tools for enquiry are questions. Ask a question and it is almost impossible for anyone listening to stop their brain thinking of an answer.



Basic Rules

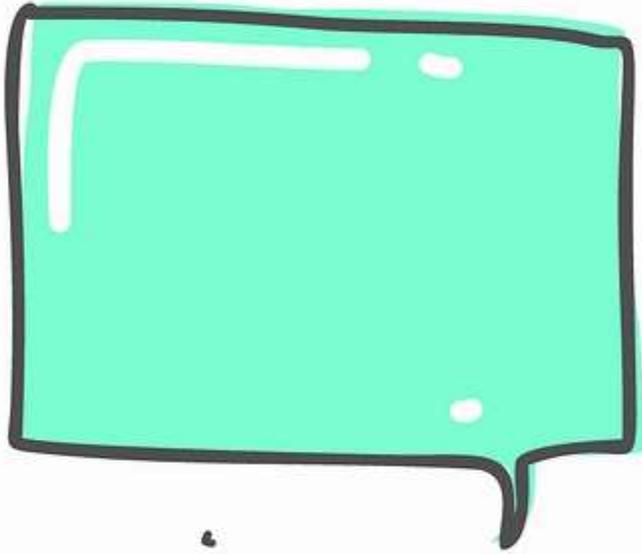
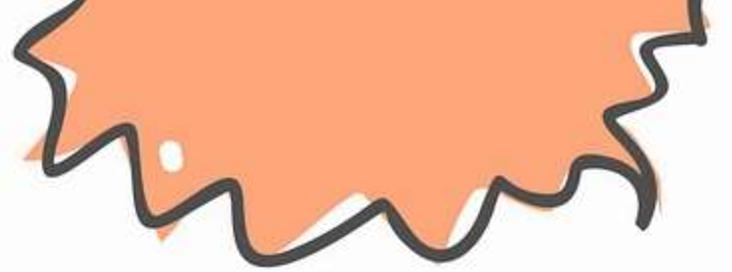
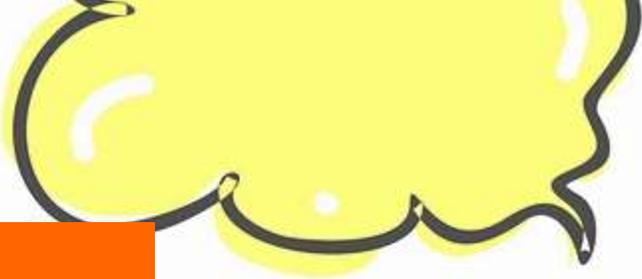
5. Open questions. Open questions are particularly useful in dialogue. These ask the why and what questions, and open things up for fuller exploration. Who, when and where tend to be more specific questions, so focusing on what and why is a good capability to cultivate?

6. Good manners matter.

7. Body language. Notice your body language as you participate. When you lose interest or find you disagree with or judge what is being said, what happens to your eye contact with the speaker and others in the group? What happens to your posture? Lack of eye-contact and the shifting of someone's body back and out from the group speaks volumes to others – and they can get the wrong message.



DIALOGUE SKILLS



Main Dialogue Skills

Deep listening

Deep listening derives from the conscious choice to listen. It involves quietening the voice in our heads so that we can hear the true story of the person to whom we are listening. As we listen to understand their whole story, we literally stay quiet and just listen.

- **Listen VS. Hear – What is the difference?**

The verbs “listen” and “hear” seem identical, but there is a subtle difference between them. But in some cases, we can often use them interchangeably.

LISTEN	HEARING
<p>Is to pay attention to a sound.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voluntary• With attention• With effort <p>You make a decision to listen.</p>	<p>Is to sense a sound with your ears.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involuntary• Without attention• Without effort <p>You do not make a conscious decision to hear.</p>



Main Dialogue Skills

Respecting others

It can be particularly difficult to practice respect, when we interact with people who have contrasting views to our own. Practicing this dialogue skill therefore becomes imperative if we are to develop the true capacity to dialogue.

While respecting others does not mean that you have to agree with them, it does mean that you will allow them the time and space to have their say and you will see it as a perspective that while you may not understand it, it is a perspective that is valid in the context that it contributes, even if only in a small way, to our understanding of the 'complete' picture of whatever is our area of focus at the time.

Inquiry

This is the capacity to ask genuine questions. As such it encourages the use of open questions that enhance our understanding of different perspectives or assist in the deeply held mental models that lie behind many perspectives to come to the surface.



Main Dialogue Skills

Voicing openly (advocacy)

Many of us are quite talented in this skill, at least in part. Voicing openly is the capacity to say what you think *and* to be able to explain why you think what you think. Unfortunately, many people struggle to share their view. All views, if they exist, are important for the development of a true understanding of a situation. If those views are not shared, then a part of the picture is missing which is why voicing is so important in the context of dialogue.

Suspending assumptions & judgements

The capacity to explain why we hold the views that we hold lies at the heart of suspending assumptions & judgements. This allows people to look at them, question them and assist us in developing a deeper understanding of our perspectives. To suspend your assumptions & judgements illustrates a willingness to be vulnerable which is a key attribute of servant leaders. If we discover that our views are not useful, we could adopt new ones.



Main Dialogue Skills

Reflecting

Our fast-paced world offers little time to reflect. However, the capacity to reflect is a big rock and enhances our communication skills and capacity to dialogue through considering how we have just practiced our skills. In team environments it is worth holding a reflection at the end of an attempted dialogue to recognize where the skills of dialogue were used effectively and where they could be improved.



ARGUMENTATION SKILLS



Active Listening

It is important that we develop the skill of listening properly. It is important to remember that we listen with more than our ears; we can show our attention with our eyes and bodies and in the ways that we react to one another.

Are we able to ask questions to get more information or deeper understanding?

When we listen properly, we are engaging with the person who is speaking, and we are valuing what they are saying. Most importantly we are showing that we value the person and their ideas, not just waiting to share our own points of view.



9 Keys to Active Listening

1. Thinking about what your body language and posture are saying to them
2. Not interrupting
3. Using silence effectively, waiting for them to say what they need to say
4. Paraphrasing or summarizing the emotion and content of what you are hearing. You are not agreeing with the person, merely reiterating what they said.
5. Reflecting an emotion – “You are feeling angry.”
6. Reflecting content – “You feel angry because these things have happened to you.”
7. Refraining from judgement or evaluation, just reflecting what the other person is saying – “If I understand what you’re saying...”
8. Asking the person to say more about their experiences or feelings in a way that shows you are interested.
9. Affirming a person when you agree with what they are saying.



LISTEN

L	LOOK interested, get interested.
I	INVOLVE yourself by responding.
S	STAY on target.
T	TEST your understanding
E	EVALUATE what you hear.
N	NEUTRALISE your feelings.

Critical Thinking

What is critical thinking?

Critical thinking is the ability to think clearly and rationally, understanding the logical connection between ideas. Critical thinking might be described as the ability to engage in reflective and independent thinking.

Critical thinking empowers to analyze information, to reflect upon its sources and to be able to make informed and rational judgments. We should be able to explain why we have reached their conclusions and support their points of view.



In order to think critically...

- Think about a topic or issue in an objective and critical way.
- Identify the different arguments there are in relation to a particular issue.
- Evaluate a point of view to determine how strong or valid it is.
- Recognize any weaknesses or negative points that there are in the evidence or argument.
- Notice what implications there might be behind a statement or argument.
- Provide structured reasoning and support for an argument that we wish to make.

Questioning

- Good questions are those that help to enrich our understanding. We want to improve our ability to ask questions that enable us to elicit full explanations, deeper meaning and a detailed explanation of significance.
- Good questions enable us to dive into the experience of other people and to start to appreciate and understand the way that they see the world and why that is the case.
- Good questions are often response questions, that is, questions that arise from what has been heard; in order to deepen the understanding of something.



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Global Awareness

- The idea behind global awareness is to create global citizens who are open to those raised in different countries, cultures and religious settings.
- The awareness of the globalization processes help us to see ourselves as individuals within a global community and to develop an appreciation of how we are not isolated but, in fact, valuable and valued citizens of the world.
- When we think about global awareness, we want to be proud of the things that make our communities unique while at the same time recognizing the things that we share with the others around the world. It is important that we can see the diversity of the world in which we live – not only being aware of things that are similar between different people, traditions and countries, but also being confident about exploring differences between them.



