



Lot's TALK

Pluralist Lab



FACILITATOR SCRIPT
TRIADIC ILLUMINATION EXERCISE

Introduction

[10 minutes] (Indicate start / end times)

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, AND ICE BREAKER

Lead Facilitator: [A FEW WORDS INTRODUCING YOURSELF, SUCH AS...]

“Hi, I’m XXX from YYY and this (gesture towards co-facilitator) is AAA from BBB. We are excited to hear what you all have to say today. In a minute, I’ll tell you the purpose of our event today and how this session will work. But before we dive in, let’s all share a little about ourselves. Please go around and say your name, your major, where you call home, and what you enjoy doing in your free time.”

PURPOSE OF THE PLURALIST LAB

“The purpose of today’s conversation is not to engage in debate or convince someone else of your opinion. It might feel a little different than conversations you’ve had in the past. One of the theories of our work is that we have lost the ability to engage in civil exchange. **Our muscles have atrophied** and the purpose of our time today is to strengthen those muscles. We hope you leave both with more confidence in sharing your own opinion and better able to listen deeply to others.”

FORMAT (IF HOSTING A “LET’S TALK: PLURALIST LAB INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP”)

“Let’s talk a little about the format and how this is going to work. Wait until I give the signal to open your conversation guide. We will use it to **talk about 2 issues** to help us exercise our muscles for engagement. I / we will facilitate the conversation but will not offer my / our opinions on the topic unless absolutely needed for the sake of intellectual diversity.”

FORMAT (IF USING LET'S TALK HEAT LEVELS)

“We’ll sequence our civil discourse exercises today by using FIRE’s heat levels, which are designed to help leaders guide their discussion group towards constructive conversations. These levels keep the topics discussed appropriate to the group’s discussion readiness, in order to gradually teach civil discourse to group members. The higher the level, the hotter (or more controversial) the topic. After discussion of a lower-level question goes well, it’s time to advance to the next heat level! Your group might benefit from going down a level if you sense emotional temperatures spiking. When emotional temperatures spike, the group is more likely to engage in bad faith arguments, which impedes constructive conversation.”

A FEW RULES OF THE GAME

- Be careful to speak **one at a time**.
- Try to **use one another’s names** in our conversation.
- Please keep your **cell phone off**. You may see one of the facilitators using their phones to keep track of time.
- After the workshop, you can **share the general ideas** that were discussed, but **don’t attribute them to someone** using their name. You can’t say, “oh my gosh I can’t believe Sally said she likes ...” or share anything here on social media other than the general ideas.

CORE PRINCIPLES

“As we discuss these issues together, I’ll ask you all to practice our three core principles: **Curiosity, Authenticity, Respect**. We are curious. We want to listen to understand why someone else would think or feel the way they do. We stay curious for a long time before moving into judgment. We are authentic. We don’t mask our real opinions or why we chose them. If you selected a response because of your faith, your background, your personal story, feel free to share it. And finally, we treat each other with equal dignity. We all deserve to be at the table.”

Understanding our Differences Warmup

[10 minutes] (Indicate start / end times)

To get a feel for how this is going to work, let's get started with one of the **biggest and longest running controversies in our country**.

Each of you has some colored paddles [ORANGE/ROSE/PURPLE]. We will use these to help us identify where everyone lies on the issue. When I give the signal, raise the paddle that corresponds to your answer, and hold it up for all to see, then place it on the table near your name card.

Open your worksheet to the first page. Here is the issue. **Please indicate which you feel has the biggest impact on human happiness:**

CATS [ORANGE]

DOGS [PURPLE]

NOT SURE / BOTH / NEITHER / OTHER [ROSE]

[COMMENT ON THE SPLIT - "It looks like we have X Purple, Y Orange, and Z Rose"]

[WHY CATS...]

[PURPLE] _____, tell me why you think [ORANGE] _____ believes cats do a better job of making people happy.

[ORANGE] _____, what did [PURPLE] _____ get right? Are there other things about cats that you would like [ORANGE] _____ to know?

[WHY DOGS...]

[ORANGE] _____, tell me why you think [PURPLE] _____ believes dogs do a better job of making people happy.

[PURPLE] _____, what did [ORANGE] _____ get right? Are there other things about cats that you would like [ORANGE] _____ to know?

[WHAT REMAINS STANDING...]

_____, as you have listened to everyone talk about cats and dogs and how they impact human happiness, what are the things you are hearing that stand out in your mind?

_____, what are the things, if any, where there seems to be agreement? What does this conversation tell you about the ongoing controversy of cats versus dogs?

Great, that was a good start. Now let's jump into the opinions we brought you here to share.

WE WILL NOW DISCUSS TWO TOPICS

I am going to ask you to turn to the next page. You are going to see a question on that page. I'd like you to select the response that best fits your thoughts on the topic. In the space provided, write down three reasons you selected that response. You will use these notes as reminders during our conversation."

"Throughout the session you will hear certain words or phrases that will pique your interest. Pay attention to these words and write them down in the space provided in your conversation guide to use in another exercise."

Okay, please turn the page... [Read the question and the response options out loud]

Topic A

[USING A LET'S TALK HEAT LEVEL 2 QUESTION OR AN OPTION FROM THE "TOPICAL QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES" RESOURCE]

[35 min] (Indicate start / end times)

| | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------|
| [INSERT QUESTION HERE] | | |
| [INSERT ORANGE RESPONSE] | I'M NOT SURE / BOTH / NEITHER / OTHER | [INSERT PURPLE RESPONSE] |
| Please identify three reasons you selected the response you did. | | |
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |

[ALLOW 1-2 minutes for participants to write out their reasons]

Let's see where we stand on this issue. Again -

- INSERT ORANGE RESPONSE [ORANGE]
- INSERT PURPLE RESPONSE [PURPLE]
- I'm not sure /both / neither / other [ROSE]

Raising your paddles, let's all reveal where we stand on this issue.

So it looks like we have _____ [ORANGE] _____ [PURPLE], and _____ [ROSE].

[PURPLE...]

- [ORANGE] _____, tell me why you think [PURPLE] _____ believes [INSERT PURPLE RESPONSE]?
- [PURPLE] _____, what did [ORANGE] _____ get right? How did [ORANGE] _____ do in capturing your reasons and feelings on this issue? Are there other things you would like [ORANGE] _____ to know about how you feel on this issue or why you feel the way you do?

[ORANGE...]

- [PURPLE] _____, tell me why you think [ORANGE] _____ believes [INSERT ORANGE RESPONSE]?
- [ORANGE] _____, what did [PURPLE] _____ get right? How did [PURPLE] _____ do in capturing your reasons and feelings on this issue? Are there other things you would like [PURPLE] _____ to know about how you feel on this issue or why you feel the way you do?
- [ROSE] _____, what are your thoughts now that you have heard [PURPLE] _____ and [ORANGE] _____ both talk about [INSERT TOPIC SUMMARY]?
- What are the things that stand out after both talked about these approaches?
- What about either or both makes sense and seems right?
- What about either or both doesn't make sense or seems wrong?

[WHAT REMAINS STANDING...]

So now we have heard both sides of this issue, as you have listened to everyone talk about [INSERT TOPIC], what are the things you are hearing that stand out in your mind?

- What, if any, thoughts raised by a point of view that was different than yours were most compelling?
- What are the areas, if any, where there seems to be agreement?
- What, if anything, did you learn from our conversation on this?
- Do you see this issue any differently than you did before today?
- Was it useful hearing another point of view on this topic? How? Why?
- What might we be missing that someone not at this table might think or believe that hasn't been addressed?

Now, take a few moments to write down any words or phrases that got you excited, upset, generated another emotion or thought. As a reminder, we will use these words in another exercise.

Okay, please turn the page for our next topic... [Read the question and the response options out loud]

Topic B

[USING A LET'S TALK HEAT LEVEL 3 QUESTION OR AN OPTION FROM THE "TOPICAL QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES" RESOURCE]

[35 min] (Indicate start / end times)

| | | |
|--|--|--------------------------|
| [INSERT QUESTION HERE] | | |
| [INSERT ORANGE RESPONSE] | I'M NOT SURE / BOTH / NEITHER / OTHER | [INSERT PURPLE RESPONSE] |
| Please identify three reasons you selected the response you did. | | |
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |

[ALLOW 1-2 minutes for participants to write out their reasons]

Let's see where we stand on this issue. Again -

- INSERT ORANGE RESPONSE [ORANGE]
- INSERT PURPLE RESPONSE [PURPLE]
- I'm not sure /both / neither / other [ROSE]

Raising your paddles, let's all reveal where we stand on this issue.

So it looks like we have ____ [ORANGE] ____ [PURPLE], and ____ [ROSE].

[PURPLE...]

- [ORANGE] _____, tell me why you think [PURPLE] _____ believes [INSERT PURPLE RESPONSE]?
- [PURPLE] _____, what did [ORANGE] _____ get right? How did [ORANGE] _____ do in capturing your reasons and feelings on this issue? Are there other things you would like [ORANGE] _____ to know about how you feel on this issue or why you feel the way you do?

[ORANGE...]

- [PURPLE] _____, tell me why you think [ORANGE] _____ believes [INSERT ORANGE] [RESPONSE]?
- [ORANGE] _____, what did [PURPLE] _____ get right? How did [PURPLE] _____ do in capturing your reasons and feelings on this issue? Are there other things you would like [PURPLE] _____ to know about how you feel on this issue or why you feel the way you do?
- [ROSE] _____, what are your thoughts now that you have heard [PURPLE] _____ and [ORANGE] _____ both talk about [INSERT TOPIC SUMMARY]?
- What are the things that stand out after both talked about these approaches?
- What about either or both makes sense and seems right?
- What about either or both doesn't make sense or seems wrong?

[WHAT REMAINS STANDING...]

So now we have heard both sides of this issue, as you have listened to everyone talk about [INSERT TOPIC], what are the things you are hearing that stand out in your mind?

- What, if any, thoughts raised by a point of view that was different than yours were most compelling?
- What are the areas, if any, where there seems to be agreement?
- What, if anything, did you learn from our conversation on this?
- Do you see this issue any differently than you did before today?
- Was it useful hearing another point of view on this topic? How? Why?
- What might we be missing that someone not at this table might think or believe that hasn't been addressed?

Now, take a few moments to write down any words or phrases that got you excited, upset, generated another emotion or thought.

Wrap up

[1 minute]

Thanks for a great discussion. We'll take a 30-minute break. Help yourself to some snacks, and feel free to continue the conversation informally. Please be back in your seats by [INSERT TIME].



How FIRE can help

We are counting on you to help cultivate a culture of free speech on your campus! FIRE is here to provide guidance and resources. We have a team of experts at your disposal who can help decode and demystify your school's policies, help you talk to administrators, and offer advice on tricky free speech questions. Additionally, we can send guides, literature, speakers, and FIRE materials. Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions. We are here to help!

