



Discussion: Key Terms

Discussion Session

Time: 60 minutes

Interdisciplinary work, by nature, involves encountering new vocabulary. It is more challenging when a single term has unique meanings depending on the discipline invoking said term. The goals of this session are to:

- Practice not only participating in cross-disciplinary conversations, but also observing them to enhance one's own understanding of these relationships.
- Investigate perspectives on key terms relating to psychological research based on previous understanding of science/scientific terms

Preparation: Prior to conducting this session, it is helpful to survey trainees on terms they think may have different meanings or interpretations across fields. These terms can be given as prompts for groups inside the fishbowl to discuss. Sample terms will be given below.

This session utilizes a fishbowl discussion, with the goal of giving trainees the opportunity to both engage in interdisciplinary conversations as well as observe communication across individuals from different academic backgrounds. A fishbowl discussion involves two groups of trainees. One, smaller, group is actively engaged in discussing a topic while a second, slightly larger, group surrounds the actively discussing group. The role of the first group is to have a robust discussion of a key idea or term relating to psychological research that may differ across theology or philosophy, while the role of this second group is to observe the dynamics of the discussion:

- Who is participating in the discussion?
- What key terms do trainees have an easier time discussing?
- What key terms are more challenging?
- What are trainees from a particular academic background missing about the arguments made by trainees from a different background?

The purpose of the second group is to remove the temptation of thinking solely about one's response to a discussion prompt and give trainees the opportunity to observe and consider the process of interdisciplinary collaboration without being involved in the discussion. Both participating in and observing discussions will enhance trainees' understanding of cross-disciplinary relationships.

Depending on the amount of time available and number of trainees, you may choose to have multiple fishbowls occurring at one time. We recommend no more than 5-6 trainees within a fishbowl at one time so that trainees can contribute to the discussion. Facilitators may choose whether to set groups of 5-6 people that rotate every 10 minutes (or longer, if time permits) or whether they want to tap individual trainees to rotate out of the fishbowl at varying intervals of time. Regardless of the method selected to create the fishbowl, it is especially useful if groups contain a mixture of theologians, philosophers, and psychologists with varying academic

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perspectives. When the trainees are not within the fishbowl, they will spend the remainder of the time watching the discussion unfold.

When inside the fishbowl, trainees will discuss how their discipline (or themselves, as a scholar) perceive a key term or issue. Some examples of key terms that could be discussed include:

- Emotion
- Adaptive
- Growth
- Normative
- Validity
- Mediator
- Interaction

After all trainees have had the opportunity to engage in the fishbowl discussion, bring the entire group together to discuss what they observed throughout the discussion. Ideas for discussion prompts are below:

- What did you observe about the way that philosophers, theologians, or historians approach these terms that is similar to or different from the psychologists?
- Was it difficult to be outside the fishbowl? If so, what kinds of comments did you want to respond to?