Language PAL Leader Training 2022-23

Thank you for signing up to be a PAL Leader. This training booklet provides additional information and resources to support the training session and planning your future sessions.

Contents

What is PAL?

- Study sessions for all students led by PAL Leaders who are proficient/ native speakers in the language.
- Sessions will allow you to come together with other language learners to practise speaking and listening to languages and learn about their respective cultures.
- Sessions are interactive, informal, and fun!

Benefits include

- Academic development & progression.
- Opportunity to meet peers from various courses and levels of study.
- Chance to improve your skillset.
- Aim is to improve overall experience by offering students peer to peer support!

Watch our PAL video to find out more: https://youtu.be/Yeyo5FqwvlM

Support Available

Language PAL Team

Sam, Leah, and Sophie are based in the SU and support PAL Leaders in their role. You can email them on PeerSupport@bath.ac.uk.

Daisy Zhu is based in the Skills Centre and supports PAL Leaders in their role.

Senior PAL Leaders

Senior PAL Leaders are experienced leaders who support you throughout the year. They run debriefs and other activities and are also there to discuss your plans for PAL sessions and any problems you may be facing. They've been a PAL Leader before so understand what you're doing.

Structure of a PAL session

Here is a basic outline of a PAL session. It is important to include all sections in some way, however you may wish to reduce the length of time spent on icebreakers or use an initial main activity as an icebreaker activity.

	What it involves?	Time
Start Of Session	▪ Informal conversations with students as they arrive ▪ Icebreaker(s), agenda setting or starter activity ▪ Explanation of PAL and PAL Leader's role	5-10 mins
Main Body Of Session	▪ Have activities ready to allow students to explore the content ▪ Use of redirecting questions and wait-time ▪ Student-to-student interaction ▪ Check for understanding ▪ Invisible PAL Leaders	30 mins
End Of Session	▪ Summarise the content ▪ Student-led; students sharing ideas and responses to tasks ▪ Leaders thank the students for attending ▪ Signpost what the content of PAL will be next week/ask for suggestions for content the following week ▪ Encourage participants to come again	5-10 mins
After The Session	▪ Submit the attendance sheet to Peer Support.	5 mins

Teaching and Facilitation

PAL Leaders facilitate PAL sessions, rather than teaching their students or re-teaching course content. This table summarises the key differences between teaching and facilitation. You should aim to include the key points from the facilitation column in your sessions and avoid the points in the teaching column.

	Teaching	Facilitation
Curriculum	Teacher sets the curriculum or works along a set curriculum. Matched to course/unit learning objectives.	Students set the agenda and create their own curriculum. Facilitator guides this process. Matched to own student individual learning objectives.
Delivery	Lecture format.	Creative and thorough questioning. Use of space and process.
Interaction	Typically one way – lecturer sharing information with student.	Interaction is across participants; drawing upon experiences and own beliefs.
Relationship	A power hierarchy exists between teacher and student.	Facilitators position themselves at the same level as the students.

PAL Leader Facilitation Techniques

Here are some valuable techniques that you should use regularly during your PAL sessions. If you want to read more on these subjects, you can find PDF copies of the references on the [PAL Leader Resources Page](#).

1. Student to Student Interaction

It is important that PAL Leaders encourage student to student interaction during sessions. In collaborative learning environments such as PAL, students are responsible for helping each other learn, as well as learning themselves. Not only do students develop their understanding of course concepts through group work, but also develop social skills and critical thinking. Students who work together collaboratively achieve higher levels of thought and retain information longer than students who work alone (Johnson and Johnson 1986).

Strategies and tips for promoting student to student interaction:

- Leaders should plan student to student interaction into their sessions.
- Student to leader interactions limit the number of students who benefit from interaction to only the student speaking.
- Getting students to ask each other questions or discuss topics or methods in groups encourages all members of the group to interact with one another.
- Using wait time increases the opportunity for students to interact with one another.
- Leaders should redirect questions to other students to encourage students to answer each other's questions.
- Students should work in small groups whenever possible.
- Leaders should encourage students to study together outside of the sessions.
- Leaders should pay attention to student responses and check for understanding when needed.
- Observe the pattern of interactions during your sessions. Use interaction diagrams to map these patterns to see how you progress from session to session.
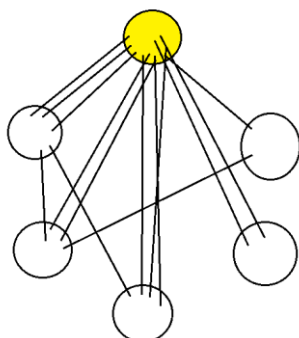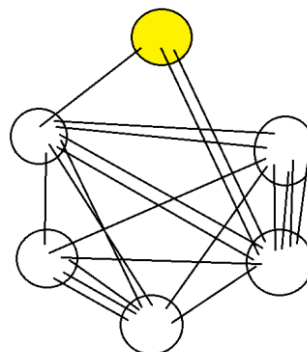
Diagram 1   Diagram 2

2. Redirecting questions (Riley 1981)

This is where the PAL Leader resists answering a question and poses another question to redirect it back to the group. It is based on the idea that we all learn better when we have to explain our thinking to somebody else, promoting student to student interactions rather than student to leader interactions. It is natural to answer a question when asked, so redirecting questions requires the leaders to think carefully when they are asked questions by attendees and find a way to redirect questions back to the group.

Common ways to redirect questions include:

- Does anyone else know the answer to this question?
- Can anyone help us with this question?
- What information would you need to answer that?
- Let's try and work this out together…
- Can you suggest another way to think about this?
- Let's write down everything we know about this topic/problem…
- Let's rephrase that question and work out what we need to answer it.

After an initial redirection, you may need to encourage conversations to continue, or go into more depth. Possible additional questions include:

- What are we trying to find out here?
- What do you need to do next?
- Can anyone add something to this?
- When have you done something like this before?
- Can you define [a key word from their question]?
- Can you be more specific?

- Can you summarise the discussion up to this point?

3. Wait time (Rowe 1974)

Wait time is the time that elapses between a PAL Leader and student speaking. There are two kinds of wait-time:

1. The time the leader waits after asking a question to the group.
2. The time the leader waits after a response from an individual.

Wait time is an important factor in successful PAL sessions. Research has demonstrated that the quality and quantity of students' verbal responses increases significantly if teachers regularly utilise at least three seconds of wait-time. This is particularly valuable when pausing after a student responds.

Wait time seems to benefit students by allowing the brain more time to consolidate information, giving deeper processing of information. Deep-level knowledge is associated with comprehension, abstraction, critical judgement and evaluation (de Jong and Ferguson-Hessler 1996); deep-knowledge "has been thoroughly processed, structured and stored in memory in a way that makes it useful for application and task performance."

Benefits for Students	Benefits for Leaders
- More students answer question - More accurate answers - Answers are more elaborate, reasoned and supported - Students listen to each other more - More speculative responses - More questions asked - More participation by weaker students - Increased use of logical consistency in responses	- Asks fewer questions - Connects questions better - Ask more higher-order questions - Demonstrates greater flexibility - Expects more from weaker students

If nobody responds to a question after waiting 5-10 seconds, you can:

- Repeat the question.
- Rephrase or simplify the question.

- Ask a student to try to rephrase or simplify the question.
- Break down the question into component parts.
- Make the question more specific.
- Ask students what they don't understand about the question.

4. Checking for Understanding

PAL Leader techniques are often designed to promote student to student interaction, but it cannot be assumed that students are gaining understanding from these interactions. Instead, it is important that you check for understanding during the session.

The most common method for checking understanding is to ask students closed questions such as "do you understand?" However, this is not an effective method of checking for understanding, as students may be uncomfortable admitting they don't understand, especially if in front of a group, or if lots of time has been spent on a topic. Instead, open questions should be used.

It is vital that students can explain the discussed topics in their own words, or use methods to solve new problems on their own. If you think students haven't "got" the topic or method, you should discuss it again. Leaders should create opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding.

Possible ways to check for understanding include:

- Maintain eye contact with students during the session – you can often tell when students are confused.
- Ask someone to summarise the concept you have just covered, asking the group to help if they are struggling.
- Ask a volunteer to write the main points of the discussion on the board.
- Ask questions that require the student to answer correctly.
- Make mistakes and see if the students notice, and ask them to correct the mistakes if they do. Use this method infrequently to avoid confusing students.
- Ask students to rephrase questions or responses during the session.
- Ask for real-life examples or applications of concepts or methods.

5. Other Types of Questioning

Knowing which types of questions to use in different situations will help to facilitate effective group discussion. Some question types and their uses are outlined below.

<u>Open questions: an invitation to talk</u>

Facilitators should normally use open questions. Open questions allow the other person to elaborate on information of their choice. A closed question, on the other hand, emphasises content and can often be answered in a few words or with a yes or no. Open questions are preferred to stimulate conversation as they allow the person to whom you are listening to 'lead' the conversation. For instance, 'Did you understand the main points of the first lecture on EU law?' is a closed question. An open equivalent might be, 'Could you explain to me what you thought the most important features of the lecture were?' How, where, why, what, who, which, can you etc. can all be useful ways of starting an open question.

While open questions are normally preferable, closed questions can also be very useful. You can initiate a conversation with a closed question before asking more open questions around that topic, or you can check for understanding.

<u>Intervention questions</u>

Students may ask for help or Facilitators may become aware that there is a problem from the behaviour of the group. To make it easy for students to admit they are having difficulty, the Facilitator should think about open questions that can promote discussion. The closed question, 'Is everything OK?' prompts the answer 'Yes.' Instead, try the open question, 'What can I do to help?'

Clarifying questions

Clarifying questions can be used when a student's answer is vague or unclear. The Facilitator asks the student for meaning or more information. Use a mixture of open questions, reflective questions (questions which encourage the student to develop a line of thought further), and closed questions (questions used to check facts).

- Are you saying that…?
- Could you explain that in a little more detail?
- Can you be a bit clearer about that? Can you be more specific?
- How would you explain that in an essay or exam?
- Anything else you would like to add?

Refocusing questions

Another way to clarify student ideas is to use refocusing questions. These encourage the student to see a concept from another perspective by focusing on relationships.

- How is that related to…?
- How does that tie into…?
- How does that compare with…?
- If that is true, then what would happen if…?

Encouraging/probing questions

The PAL Facilitator can help students to begin to process information beyond the superficial level of delivering the 'right' answer. Ask questions which encourage students to find the next steps for themselves using open and hypothetical questions:

- What had you planned to do next?
- What do you think would happen if…?
- Do you think that will work?
- How did you arrive at that answer?
- Can you suggest another way to think about this?
- When have you done something like this before?

Planning PAL Sessions

PAL Session Plan Template

Use this template to help plan your PAL sessions.

	Activity	Collaborative learning technique	Time
Start Of Session			
Activity 1			
Activity 2			
End Of Session			

Main Activities

Here are some example activity ideas that you can use in your sessions. You may find some of the activities are more suitable as ice breaker or main activities, or at different points in the year. There are more ideas on the resource page and elsewhere online, or you can bring your own ideas to your session plans.

Memory

This strategy works as a great opener for a PAL session. The PAL Leader should prepare between 12-24 note cards. Half of the cards should have vocabulary terms and the other half should have corresponding definitions. At the session, the PAL Leader should shuffle the cards and place them face down. Then get the students to work together to find all of the correct matches.

Peer Lessons

Divide the students into small groups. Give each group one problem and have them write out their solution on the board. Have each group come up and explain their problem is as much detail as possible. Have them show their thought processes and methods used in finding the solution.

External Material

This is a good way to start a session if no one suggests a topic they would like to cover. Bring in copies of an article in your language and have students read the article and highlight any points they have found interesting. There are also some great clips on YouTube or TED.com

Flash Cards

Get students to produce a set of flash cards on a specific topic. Flash cards include a question, concept or key word or phrase on one side and a definition, description or answer on the other side. Students can then test each other with the flash cards.

K.W.L

This technique helps students to activate prior knowledge and link to new information to make connections with what is already known. Title three columns: What I Know; What I Want to Know, and What I Learned. Ask the students to fill out the first two columns which then could provide a basis of any understanding that needs to be improved.

Predict Test

Put the students into groups of two or three and assign them the task of writing a question for a specific topic. Ask students to swap their question with another group and then the groups should draft a response to the question.

Peer Pong

Students are divided into two teams, each at either end of the peer pong table. Instead of filling the cups with drink, put slips of paper with questions, problems, concepts or translations in each cup. If a student gets a ball in a cup, a member of the opposing team has to answer the question, solve the problem, explain the concept, or translate the phrase.

Collaborative Learning Techniques

Collaborative learning techniques refer to how the group is arranged. We can use these with an activity idea to help run our session. You can often arrange the group in many ways and use the same (or very similar) activity. This is especially useful when you have more or less students than you were expecting, as you can often keep the same activity and just arrange the group differently. Below are the 8 collaborative learning techniques you could use in your sessions:

1. Group Discussion - The entire group discuss an idea or question together, students can contribute if they want to.
2. Turn to a partner - Split the group into pairs (and a 3 if there's an odd number) to work on an activity.
3. Individual presentation – One member of the group presents an answer, topic or discussion to the group.
4. Clusters – Split the group into subgroups – you may let the students choose who they want to work with or you may allocate groups.
5. Think, pair, share – You give students time to think on their own, before turning to a partner to discuss further, and then finally sharing with the whole group.
6. Assigned discussion leader - A participant gives their answer or interpretation of a topic and then leads the group discussion.
7. Jigsaw - Split your activity into multiple parts and allocate each part to a different group – it should rely on every group doing their bit.
8. Group survey - Each member of the group gives their opinion or answer to a question or topic.

Plenaries

Plenaries are used during or at the end of a session to review aims and consolidate the students' learning. They are a vital part of every PAL session and should not be forgotten or skipped over. It's worth having a couple of very quick plenary activities ready to use in case you are running out of time in a session!

- **Quiz** - prepare a quiz on the topics discussed in the session.
- **WWW and EBI** – students write down one thing that went well (What Went Well) and one thing they'd like to improve (Even Better If).
- **Tweet it!** - get students to write a tweet to summarise one of the concepts you have covered in the session.
- **Two stars and a wish** – students write down two things they have done in the session (two stars) and one thing they'd like to improve (a wish).
- **Emojigrams or dingbats** – students summarise key concepts from the session using only emojis or pictures. Swap questions for others to try.
- **In the News** - get students to write a short news article about what they've learnt in the session, in a way that's easy to understand.
- Spot the mistakes – show students a solution to a problem or a paragraph on a topic with several errors in it. Can students spot the errors and correct them?

Peer Support Training Resources

You can borrow training resources from the Peer Support Team to help you in your sessions. We have lots of stationary, flipchart paper, games, etc. and you can find a full list of resources on the [PAL Leader Resources Hub](). If you want to use any of the resources, please email [peersupport@bath.ac.uk]() in plenty of time to reserve the resources you want and to arrange collection from the Peer Support Office.

Online Resources

There are also plenty of online resources which you can sign up to for free to use during your sessions. Here are some of our favourites:

- Kahoot – create fun and interactive quizzes
- Mentimeter – create interactive presentations and add polls, quizzes, etc.
- Quizlet – create revision games and flashcards or use existing ones
- Sli.do – crowdsource questions and ideas from attendees

Varied Attendance

Attendance at PAL sessions can vary week to week and the numbers of students in the session can impact how you run the it. Here are some tips for handling different sized groups.

If 20+ students turn up…

- Large group activities – jigsaw, clusters, think-pair-share
- Divide into subgroups and summarize as smaller groups
- PAL Leaders split off and work in smaller groups
- Be conscious of managing time and group discussions – timed activities

If 1-4 students turn up…

- Work as a whole group – avoid splitting into pairs
- Be more hands on and sit with the group (if appropriate)
- Share more of your experience
- Seek feedback for why others may not be attending

If nobody turns up…

- Wait in the room for 15 minutes
- Think about why students may not have come to the session
- Plan with your fellow PAL Leaders how you can promote PAL for next week

- Use the time to reflect on your own experience as a PAL Leader
- Examples for interview include resilience, creative thinking, problem solving

Your First Session

Your first PAL session is likely to be the most daunting session of the year. This is perfectly normal and your fellow PAL Leaders will probably be feeling the same. Here are some tips to help you during your first session.

- Plan the session– ensure everyone is clear on what they will be doing and how each activity will run. This will give you confidence going into the session.
- Attendance may be either very big or very small in the first session. Think about how you will cater for both groups.
- Get to know your students and encourage them to get to know each other, so that group working will be more natural going forward.
- Explain your role as a PAL Leader and how sessions will work. PAL is often very different to how students have learnt before.
- Some activities may not work – plan a couple of simple additional activities that you can try if this happens. Don't be afraid to improvise!
- Don't forget to thank everyone for their contribution to their first session and tell them that you look forward to seeing them next time.
- Remind students of when and where the next session is and that they can suggest topics to cover for future sessions.

Ground Rules

There are normally hidden and assumed rules about what students do and respect in lectures, seminars etc., but as PAL sessions are run by fellow students it may be necessary to outline some ground rules for the sessions.

Examples of ground rules include:

- We agree and stick to starting and finishing times.
- We are working collaboratively, not competitively.
- Everyone turns up regularly unless they notify you otherwise.
- We encourage everyone to contribute in whatever ways they choose.
- Dominant and aggressive behaviour is not acceptable.
- Racist, sexist, homophobic, and transphobic comments are not acceptable.
- Anyone can point out if any of these rules are being ignored or broken.

You might ask them to talk briefly in pairs to check whether these ground rules are acceptable and if they want to clarify or add any more.

Logistics

PAL Sessions

As a PAL Leader you need to commit to leading the PAL sessions that you have been allocated. Students will attend these voluntarily and, if no one is there to run the session, then they will not come back. This will have a knock on effect on the overall integrity of the PAL scheme. However, if you cannot make a session then please do try to arrange cover informally with your peers or alternatively get in touch with the Peer Support Team.

Debriefs

Debriefs are an important part of your role as a PAL Leader. The role of the debrief is to work with you to check how your sessions are going, discuss problems, help plan future sessions, and update you on relevant PAL related information.

Debriefs should be treated in the same way as PAL sessions - if you cannot attend a debrief, then you should let your Senior PAL Leader know. Debriefs will be led by a Senior PAL Leader and in some cases your PAL Coordinator may attend as well. Your Senior PAL Leader will schedule these with you, and they will take place on Microsoft Teams.

Debriefs can last anywhere from 10 minutes to half an hour based on your needs.

Registers

It is really important that you record who is attending each PAL session. We use this data to evaluate schemes, including numbers of students engaged, weekly and semester PAL attendances, and average sessions attended. Please ensure that your register is submitted to the Peer Support Team at the end of each session.

Please invite attendees to write their name and username on a piece of paper. Please then either drop it in to Peer Support or email a photo of the register, along with the names of the leaders running the session, the date, and the language you run PAL in to peersupport@bath.ac.uk. If you email the register, please ensure that you securely shred the paper copy to protect data in line with GDPR guidelines.

Microsoft Teams

All PAL Leaders will have been added to the Microsoft Teams group 'Language PAL Leader Community'. It's the perfect place to discuss ideas and chat as a group of PAL Leaders. E.g., If you wanted to ask if anyone else had run a certain activity and if they found it worked well, or perhaps something didn't go to plan in your previous session and you'd like some support. You can also share resources.

Observations

The Peer Support Team will observe sessions once per semester. This is not an assessment; this is our opportunity to see the amazing PAL sessions you are running and see how well you are using the techniques covered in training.

We will inform all schemes when we plan to observe. Please note that we may also choose to drop in on schemes without prior warning for an unofficial observation. This may be to show a colleague or student from another scheme what you are doing in your sessions. You can also request an observation if there are issues within your scheme and you want help to resolve them, or if you want to show us the great things you are doing!

Student Leader Hub

As a PAL Leader, you are a Student Leader in The SU. The Student Leader Hub includes lots of useful resources and opportunities to help you in your role. You can find it on The SU website – make sure to explore this section during the year to see what is available.

Education Awards

At the end of the year PAL Leaders are invited to an annual awards evening. This is to thank you for all your hard work as PAL Leaders and there are several awards presented on the night. You can read more about the 2022 awards here.

Support

You can contact your Senior PAL Leader, the Peer Support Team or your PAL Coordinator if you need help with anything, or if you have any ideas to develop PAL!