

Good Thing/Bad Thing: A Starter Activity Leading to Small Group, Peer-Facilitated Dialogue

This #PhilosophyFriday resource is kindly shared by SAPERE trainer Kate Halliwell

Here is a way to introduce some peer-facilitated dialogue into your enquiries. It's aimed at practiced P4Cers from 5 year-olds upwards. The resource includes a **starter for thinking activity**, a **set of questions prompted by the activity** and an **approach to how the questions can be explored in small groups**.

Paired games and activities can be wonderful confidence-boosters, especially when turn-taking is involved. With **Good Thing/Bad Thing**, each partner has to argue one point-of-view for one minute, uninterrupted. They swap roles when their minute is up. Partners can then feed back to the community of enquiry one thing of interest that their partner told them. For example:

Pets – Good Thing/Bad Thing?

This activity can stimulate pupil questions, including those of a philosophical nature, but you could also introduce prepared questions, such as:

- Why do people have pets?
- What makes a pet a pet?
- Can any animal be a pet?
- Do people own pets or do pets own people?
- Should people have pets?
- Can pets communicate with people?
- If a pet could speak English, what might it say?
How might it affect someone's relationship with their pet?



Peer-facilitated group talk

Ask pupils to form small groups of 3 or 4. Roles can be designated to pupils by the facilitator, randomly distributed (for example, by number) or agreed within the group and include:

- a **peer facilitator** to ensure everybody has the opportunity to be heard in the time
- a **thinking skills detective** to record when specific thinking skills are used, by whom and how
- one or two **spokespeople** to feedback key points to the community of enquiry.

Each group has a different question to explore within a certain time. Afterwards, the spokespeople share their group's key points with everyone which could then, of course, inspire further enquiry on the theme. Successful use of the specific thinking skills can be shared by the detectives and celebrated, whilst those less used can become key skills to develop further next time.