



**Postdoc
Academy**

Postdoc Academy Learning Sessions Facilitator Workbook

Building Skills for a Successful Career

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How to Use this Guide

What is a Postdoc Academy Learning Session?

A learning community is a group of people who share common goals and attitudes, and who meet semi-regularly to collaborate on learning. Postdoc Academy Learning Sessions, or PALS, are learning communities for participants to connect, share and learn from one another. Practically speaking, PALS are small groups of Postdoc Academy participants who meet once a week while either taking the online course, or utilizing Postdoc Academy content from our website.

Who is this Guide for?

Each PALS will have one (or more) facilitator who is familiar with the course content, supports participant learning, and guides conversation as needed. There are no requirements for facilitating a PALS - it can be anyone interested in supporting postdocs. Some example of who a facilitator could be are:

- A postdoc from a postdoc association or a postdoc who is motivated to dive deeper into the materials and willing to lead discussions;
- Professional development staff or administrators who work in postdoc offices or other offices on campus, or those who facilitate workshops or mini-courses for postdocs and/or graduate students;
- Faculty member, faculty mentor on a training grant, or department program staff who train postdocs in a research group and/or department.

This guide contains suggestions for discussion topics, reflection prompts and learning activities designed to explore the content and encourage participants to situate the learning within their local context. We encourage you to use the guide to fit the goals, purpose and needs of your specific community. The programming is designed to be flexible. The content in the online course and the supplemental content in this guide doesn't necessarily need to be used in their entirety. You are welcome to pick and choose what best fits the needs of your community. All sessions are designed for 60-minute meetings, but activities could be extended to fill a 75- or 90-minute meeting as well depending on your goals.

Welcome to our Community of Facilitators! If you have feedback on this guide or the process of facilitating a PALS, please check the [end of this guide](#) for details on how to provide feedback to the Postdoc Academy team.

Planning for a Postdoc Academy Learning Session

What does 'Facilitation' mean in a Learning Session?

The facilitator of a Postdoc Academy Learning Session (PALS) will:

- Create a welcoming environment for learning through reflection and discussion;
- Promote equitable participation of all members;
- Build trust and create a sense of community;
- Uphold the norms and standards of the Postdoc Academy community (see page 11).

The roles and responsibilities of the facilitator include the following:

Role	Responsibilities
Organize	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Advertise to potential participants at your institution and on edX● Arrange meeting location or Zoom link and meeting times● Communicate to participants● Prepare materials before each meeting● Customize the content to fit the needs and purpose of your group
Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Guide the group in conversations and accomplishing goals● Encourage and enable others to share their expertise and experience● Provide context to the activities and discussion prompts
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Encourage respect and trust within the group● Create space for everyone to participate by intentionally creating and upholding community standards● Share additional resources for continued learning
Evaluate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Provide an optional facilitator reflection to the Postdoc Academy team● Document feedback to the Postdoc Academy team using the CIMER Assessment Platform

As a facilitator, it's important to remember that you are learning along with the other participants. We encourage you to complete the online course as you prepare for facilitating a PALS. Many of the activities are open-ended for a reason. The work in this online course is through the lens of our own personal perspective and lived experiences. As you explore the online course, consider how anything presented was new to you or stimulated you to think differently about your experiences and experiences of those around you. The facilitator is there to guide the conversation. You can share your own strategies and experiences, but you are not expected to be the expert or come up with the only answer, strategy, or plan.

As a facilitator, we encourage you to make choices that are comfortable for you and to be transparent about your choices with the group. We encourage you to map out which parts of the online content you're most comfortable with. Some parts of the online course provide an easier entry to facilitation, such as discussing the literature or career planning. It can be more challenging to facilitate conversations

around social identity and working effectively in an intercultural environment. To be transparent about your choices for the activities you choose to facilitate, you could use language such as:

- I want to re-emphasize the role of the facilitator. I'm here as a discussion guide and to learn along with the group, rather than be a sole source of knowledge.
- I want to re-emphasize the role of the facilitator. It is important to realize that we are all on a learning journey. It is my goal to move us through the process, but I need your support in offering contextualization and your unique perspective to broaden our conversations.

Consider how and when participants are sharing during each session. Think carefully if people are doing an individual reflection or sharing with a group. Reflect on the context of sharing.

- Is it in pairs? If so, do the partners have permission from one another to share with the group?
- Is the sharing with the larger group? How can you decrease social pressures for everyone to share?

There are many resources to support you as a facilitator, both at your institution and within the Postdoc Academy Community of Facilitators. The Postdoc Academy team is a resource for you and also a part of the community. At times, there may be challenging conversations that arise, this community will provide a space to discuss, share, and learn from one another. To learn more about facilitation, please visit the following resources:

1. [Appendix A](#) contains additional notes on facilitation from Rob Brown, Director of Social Justice Education at Northwestern University
2. <https://citl.indiana.edu/teaching-resources/diversity-inclusion/managing-difficult-classroom-discussions/>
3. http://www.acphd.org/media/114415/facilitation_tips.pdf

Suggested Logistics for a Postdoc Academy Learning Session

Frequency and duration:

- Meet once per week each week of the course (6 or 7 weeks)
 - This guide is built with a schedule that is staggered compared to the online course schedule. Each PALS meeting will take place the week after the online course content is released. This will allow participants to complete the online course content before diving deeper into the PALS content.
 - Week 1 of PALS is an introduction, week 2 of PALS aligns with week 1 of the online course, and so on.
- Meetings can be 60-90 minutes. Any of the content can be fit into a shorter (60 minute) timeframe or extended for a longer (90 minute) timeframe.

Location and Timing:

- Each facilitator can determine what format, virtual, face-to-face, or hybrid is the best for their participants and campus.
 - Use a web conferencing service, such as Zoom or Blackboard.

- Offer your PALS at a day and time when it is least likely to interfere with other professional or personal obligations (lunchtime, late afternoon, or early evening generally works well).

Number of participants:

- 10-20 participants are recommended.
- For groups larger than 20, it may be difficult for participants to be able to participate fully and effectively. You can also use this guide and associated materials embedded within our train-the-facilitator opportunities to create a community of facilitators at your home institution.

Format:

- Warm-ups can be valuable activities to build community, and we have included example options for each session. Choose one or several to use. They can be particularly useful in the first few sessions and more broadly used as a tool to open each session.
- This guide provides multiple activities, reflection and discussion prompts that can be used each week.
- Consider spending the last 5-10 minutes of each meeting to wrap-up, answer any questions the participants might have, and set the stage for the next meeting.
- As a reminder, these meetings should be flexible and can have any format to meet the goals of your PALS. Feel free to modify the suggested format, including adding or skipping activities or changing the length of sessions.

Recruiting:

- Due to privacy policies, we are unable to provide online course participant information to potential facilitators.
- We recommend using departmental, postdoc office, or postdoc association newsletters and flyers to recruit participants at your institution. If you so choose, you could also recruit late-career graduate students as well, who are transitioning into postdoc positions.
 - Please contact us if you'd like to use a fillable template for emails or flyers.
- We encourage you to post a note on the appropriate discussion forum in the edX online course that you're hosting a PALS at your institution.
- With your permission, we can share your PALS information on the Postdoc Academy website (www.postdocacademy.org/pals-participant-registration), social media, and newsletters.

Virtual Facilitation

For many reasons, offering PALS virtually may be a better fit for your community. This guide and the resources within are adaptable whether you are meeting in-person, virtually, or in a hybrid format. Web conferencing platforms (Zoom, Blackboard, etc) have a number of tools that might be helpful for facilitating PALS, including:

- Mics and cameras: Encouraging (but not requiring) camera use during sessions often helps participants feel more connected.

- Chat: Contributing via the chat can be more accessible to some, and also requires active facilitation - if you are facilitating with a partner, one co-facilitator may be more focused on monitoring the chat while the other speaks.
- Breakout rooms: Good for extended co-creation, can be used for small groups or 'think-pair-share' discussions, and can be facilitated or not.
[Zoom Guide](#) | [Blackboard Guide](#)
- Whiteboard / Annotate tool: Good for quick brainstorming, offering a basis for discussion.
[Zoom Guide](#) | [Blackboard Guide](#)
- Google Docs: Good for brainstorming complex activities or ideas, can move at a slower pace than a whiteboard, we suggest using a timer to support time management.
- Emoticons: Easy to use, a good formative feedback tool but not anonymous.
[Zoom Guide](#) | [Blackboard Guide](#)
- Polls: Can set-up ahead of time, are anonymous.
[Zoom Guide](#) | [Blackboard Guide](#)

A few additional tips for facilitating PALS virtually:

- Give time: Everything takes longer in the online space.
- Be specific and transparent, especially with instructions (e.g., pasting instructions into a Zoom chat before participants go into breakout rooms means that they will have those instructions available while working together).
- Invite participation by breaking the session up (discussion, breakout groups, polls, etc).
- Use tools thoughtfully.
- Don't forget the joy!
- Check-in with participants: How is virtual PALS going? What are the barriers?

Reflecting on your Facilitation

Self-reflection is a common theme throughout the online course and PALS activities. We encourage you to take a few minutes to reflect on your facilitation goals and expectations.

1. Why are you facilitating PALS?
2. What are your goals for yourself as a facilitator?
3. Describe your audience.
4. What personally do you bring to the conversation?
5. Describe any difference in power and/or positionality between you and the other members of the learning community (if known)? If so, how might this affect your facilitation?
6. What are your goals for your participants?

An Introduction to Postdoc Academy Online Courses

The Postdoc Academy is a comprehensive online and in-person program built on the National Postdoctoral Association core competencies to support skill development throughout postdoc training, from orientation to the next career step. Our goal is to build a supportive, inclusive community so postdocs can weave professional development into their journey to success. The Postdoc Academy provides flexible professional development: participants worldwide can participate entirely online and asynchronously, or join a learning community. The Postdoc Academy is an NIH-funded program collaborative created by Boston University, Northwestern University, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Michigan State University.

Succeeding as a Postdoc - Course overview

The Postdoc Academy: Succeeding as a Postdoc is the first professional development online course built specifically for postdocs and created with postdocs. The Postdoc Academy provides skill development for postdocs, from orientation to their next career step. Using inclusive, active-learning approaches, participants in this 6-week course will build skills to (1) find success as a postdoc, (2) draft an actionable career plan, (3) develop resilience, and (4) work effectively in an intercultural environment. This course explores the research related to postdoc success and guides postdocs in applying it to their environment.

To read more about this online course, visit <https://www.edx.org/course/the-postdoc-academy-succeeding-as-a-postdoc>.

Building Skills for a Successful Career - Course overview

The Postdoc Academy: Building Skills for a Successful Career focuses on developing advanced skills to help postdocs transition to their chosen career path. This 7-week course provides a deeper dive into topic areas that postdocs may not normally be introduced to in their research environment. These topic areas include (1) Exploring Leadership, (2) Building and Supervising a Team, (3) Project Management, (4) Applying Teaching Skills Beyond the Classroom, (5) Strategic Communications, and (6) Finding and Landing the Job. Additionally, this course encourages opportunities for networking within the edX platform and also hosts career panels where participants can hear from experts across various professional fields.

To read more about this online course, visit <https://www.postdocacademy.org/explore/building-skills-for-a-successful-career-course/>.

To learn more about the Postdoc Academy, visit www.postdocacademy.org or follow @PostdocAcademy on social media.

Any questions can be directed to postdocacademy@gmail.com.

Provide Feedback on PALS

We hope you enjoyed your time as a PALS facilitator! The Postdoc Academy team greatly appreciates your time and commitment to supporting postdocs. Feedback on your experience and the participant experience is important to continuously evaluate and improve the experiences of participants and facilitators in the Postdoc Academy program.

To collect feedback on PALS, the Postdoc Academy is using the CIMER (Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research) Assessment Platform. Briefly, the Postdoc Academy will share names and emails for PALS facilitators and participants with the survey platform. All participants and facilitators will receive a pre-PALS survey to collect demographics, which is critical for reporting to the National Institutes of Health. After seven weeks of PALS sessions, everyone will receive a post-PALS survey. Three months later, another post-PALS survey will be distributed to examine the impacts of PALS.

As a facilitator, you only need to provide the names and emails of your PALS participants to postdocacademy@gmail.com. Surveys will be distributed via email from postdocacademy@gmail.com using the CIMER Assessment Platform. These surveys are optional and not required for any facilitator or participant. This platform is confidential but not anonymous.

Please direct all questions to postdocacademy@gmail.com. We appreciate your feedback!

Module 0: Welcome and introduction to PALS

This PALS meeting comes before the content modules, and offers an opportunity to develop your learning community and set expectations together. Module 0 may be used in either Postdoc Academy course.

Materials / pre-work for the learning community session

Participants	Facilitator
<p><i>Any specific videos, activities, or reflections from the course that are key to session activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Not relevant for this week 	<p><i>Pre-session materials for facilitators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If meeting in-person, facilitators could bring materials for creating name badges/tents ➤ If using slides, facilitators could add a link here.

Session Outline:

Session Outcome	Activity
<p>Introductions and vision for PALS (10-15 minutes)</p>	<p>Facilitators should introduce themselves, and provide some context for why they are facilitating PALS, and what their role entails. They could also explain their vision for how the learning community might operate, logistics and expectations, and why PALS is a valuable addition to the asynchronous content.</p> <p>Participants should introduce themselves. Optional prompt: Have you taken an online course before, and why were you interested in joining a PALS?</p>
<p>Building learning community: Finding commonalities (10-15 min)</p>	<p>Prompt: In small groups or pairs, participants work together to find one thing that they share in common, professionally or personally. Small groups/pairs then report out to the large group.</p> <p>Alternative prompt 1: Each person, in pairs or trios, share two things about themselves not found on their cv. Take turns in sharing, so by the second round there's greater risk taking.</p> <p>Alternative prompt 2: One meaningful object.</p>

	<p>This is a shortened version of the ‘Culture Box’ activity, where participants are <i>asked ahead of time</i>, to choose a meaningful object that represents their cultural history and share. This prompt is really only for trained facilitators and groups with growing trust.</p>
<p>Review community standards (5-10 min)</p>	<p>Facilitators share the community standards for their PALS (some are suggested in Appendix B) and discuss any comments or edits as a group.</p> <p>Consider discussing collective accountability, particularly for attendance.</p>
<p>Identify learning goals (10-15 min)</p>	<p>This discussion could start in small groups, or take place as a large group. Prompt: What would you like to learn or take away from these PALS sessions?</p> <p>Responses may or may not be directly related to course content. If needed, examples could include: diving deeper in content, finding an accountability buddy for a specific personal or professional goal identified in the course, or sharing resources at your institution or elsewhere.</p> <p>Facilitators should take notes about what participants share to inform future sessions, and even provide a synthesis document to start the next session.</p>
<p>Wrap-up (5 min)</p>	<p>Review how people are engaging with the online content, periodic review or binge or a combination. This will help those who haven’t had edX experience hear how some are approaching it.</p> <p>Review any final logistics and give a short preview of next week’s session.</p>

Facilitator Notes and Tips:

- The focus of this week is to build community among PALS participants rather than explore content – it may be helpful to set that expectation before the session so that participants don’t assume they need to have completed Module 1 content before attending.

- This session is about trust building, and using personal narrative to become closer and more familiar with each other. Prompts explore commonalities, fun and unusual aspects of the individuals not on the CV, or sharing the origin story of a culturally meaningful object.
- Note that as facilitator, your interactions will depend on the extent to which you are a peer, near-peer, or non-peer. We recommend that if you are a peer or near-peer, to participate, but let others go first, after describing the activity and its purpose. If you are a non-peer, meaning significantly different in positionality, age, and/or career stage, then you could model the activity if it is sharing, but try not to participate in breakouts.
- In terms of group report following the trust building activities, you could ask, “how did this activity feel?” or “why do you think we start with this activity?” It is not recommended to ask people to share any private information shared by themselves or colleagues in smaller breakouts.

Building Skills for a Successful Career Module 1: Exploring Leadership

This module explores the key attributes and structures of evidence-based leadership frameworks, how styles for leadership vary in professional, cultural, and career stage contexts, and distinguishing between a leader, manager and mentor.

Developed by: Sarah Hokanson, Bennett Goldberg, Jessica Maher, Robin Greenler, and Rick McGee

Module Learning Outcomes:

- Describe the key attributes and structures of evidence-based leadership frameworks;
- Distinguish and differentiate leadership from management and mentorship;
- Reflect on your perceptions of and experiences with leadership;
- Explore how opportunities/styles for leadership vary in professional, cultural, career stage contexts;
- Apply a leadership approach to a current or future career.

Materials / pre-work for the learning community session

Participants	Facilitator
<p>Any specific videos, activities, or reflections from the course that are key to session activities</p> <p>➤ InterSECT Job Simulation video and activity, found in second to last subsection of module content</p>	<p>Pre-session materials for facilitators:</p> <p>➤ Participants and facilitator(s) should complete the High5 self-assessment prior to this session.</p>

Session Outline:

Session Outcome	Activity
<p>Warm-up (5-10 minutes)</p>	<p>Icebreaker prompt: ‘What have you found so far in the online course that has surprised you?’</p> <p>Check in with your PALS and find out how the online course is going for them thus far.</p>
<p>Reflect on your leadership skills and areas for growth. Share with peers and facilitator(s). (10-15 minutes)</p>	<p>In small groups or pairs, participants share High5 self-assessment results. Facilitators should complete the same self-assessment to help</p>

	<p>facilitate dialogue.</p> <p>Small groups or pairs then discuss similarities and differences between each participant's self-assessment. Discussion prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examine your strengths - do they resonate with you, and if so, how? ● When have you led using these strengths? ● Have you done any other personality or leadership self-assessments? ● Do these results help you get a more holistic view of yourself? How might you use this information?
<p>Apply a leadership approach to your current role as a postdoc. (30 minutes)</p>	<p>Invite the participants to think about their current environment as a postdoc. This discussion can be held in small groups and/or as a large group.</p> <p>Discussion prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are the opportunities or moments within your current role where you could or are demonstrating leadership? ● How might you pitch the outcomes of your postdoc toward a new leadership opportunity? <p>Prompts from this Padlet could be used as an example template. (Please create your own Padlet or Jamboard for this activity if you wish to have participants contribute that way.)</p>
<p>Wrap-up (5 min)</p>	<p>Answer any lingering questions and give a short preview of next week's session.</p>

Facilitator Notes and Tips:

Building Skills for a Successful Career Module 2: Building and Supervising a Team

This module explores the top three characteristics of an effective team, strategies for managing and communicating with a team, and how to cultivate positive relationships and environments.

*Please note that learners have two weeks to complete this module.

Developed by: Sarah Hokanson, Anne-Sophie Bohrer, Rique Campa, and Antonio Nunez

Module Learning Outcomes:

- Describe the top three characteristics of an effective team;
- Characterize effective strategies for communicating with your team and promoting positive relationships;
- Reflect on and practice strategies a supervisor could use to develop and manage an effective team.

Materials / course resources for learning community session

Participants	Facilitator
<p><i>Any specific videos, activities, or reflections from the course that are key to session activities:</i></p> <p>Links to course videos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Spring break case study ➤ Giving feedback ➤ Receiving feedback 	<p><i>Pre-session materials for facilitators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Role play templates: Observer Sheet and Role Play Worksheet ➤ Remind participants to come with a feedback scenario they'd like to practice - either real or hypothetical. ➤ Consider sharing the role play worksheet ahead of time so participants can review

Session Outline:

Session Outcome	Activity
<p>Warm-up (5 min)</p>	<p>Discussion prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1: Think about a time that you received feedback in a constructive way. What was positive about that interaction and why? • Option 2: Who was your ideal mentor and why? What were those interactions like? • Option 3: What do you wish your feedback superpower was and why?

Role play, part 1: Preparing for the conversation (5 min)	Participants should develop talking points to help them prepare to role play a feedback conversation in small groups. They can choose either a real conversation or use the case study provided in the module (entitled “Spring Break”).
Role play, part 2: Framing the conversation (3-5 min)	Divide session participants into small groups of 3 or 4 people. Each person in the group will have the chance to play the part of a supervisor or mentor, a mentee, or observe a role play conversation. The facilitator should time each round of role play so that everyone in each group has the same amount of time to practice.
Role play, part 3: Practicing the conversation (30-40 minutes)	<p>In each round, the person playing the role of the mentor should take one minute to describe the scenario that sets the scene for the role play. Then, with a partner from the group, the mentor should practice having the conversation for 5 minutes while another member(s) of the group observes. Finally, the observer should provide feedback to the person playing the mentor about the techniques they used during the conversation.</p> <p>This activity will take 3 or 4 rounds depending on the size of the group, or approximately 30-40 minutes.</p>
Role play, part 4: Reflection (5-10 min)	<p>Discuss in small groups, and/or reconvene as a large group.</p> <p>Discussion prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Option 1: How did that go / how did that feel? What was easy about it? What was hard? What do you still want to practice? ● Option 2: How will you implement your conversation in the next week? What communication strategies can you rely on?
Wrap-up (5 min)	Answer any lingering questions and give a short preview of next week’s session.

Facilitator Notes and Tips:

- The goal of the role play activity is not to solve a problem, but more to practice saying the words and initiating conversations. Facilitators may wish to email participants ahead of time to invite

them to bring an issue or scenario they want to practice, or participants can prepare by watching the case study materials.

- There are three options suggested for the warm-up discussion prompt. Some participants may feel apprehensive or skeptical of role play activities, and you might want to ask participants at the beginning of the session if they ever participated in a role play activity. Discussion prompt Option 3 might be a fun way to get all participants engaged in this session.
- Be sure to play the video of the case study. It is short and that way everyone has the same, recent memory of it.
- Participants may not have a positive response to participating in a role play. Naming this apprehension may help participants feel more comfortable. If you notice the room is not adjusting, you could introduce an additional icebreaker to get people laughing and connecting with their groups before moving into this activity.
- It can be harder to act as the mentee, responding to a situation you are not embedded in, than practicing as the mentor. You may review the mentee instructions in the worksheet template before sending the groups into their role play sessions.
- Since module 2 lasts two weeks during the online course, facilitators could consider holding a second session focused on giving feedback. This could involve practicing again with new groups, or reflecting on a feedback conversation they had based on the session during the prior week. Two reflection activities in part 4 have been provided so that facilitators can choose what works best for their group.

Building Skills for a Successful Career Module 3: Project Management

This module explores the common language and terminology behind project management and administration, including how to develop and maintain a budget.

Developed by: Sarah Hokanson, Anne-Sophie Bohrer, and Kevin Gonzales

Module Learning Objectives:

- Understand the common language and terminology behind project management and administration and be able to use it in developing a project;
- Distinguish the administrative functions of managing a project from the project content or goal(s);
- Apply concepts of project management to their own example project.

Materials / pre-work for the learning community session

Participants	Facilitator
<p><i>Any specific videos, activities, or reflections from the course that are key to session activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ In module 3, complete the activity “Choose your project”. Download the activity table here.➤ Review the video “Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)” under the header “Tracking a Project” here.	<p><i>Pre-session materials for facilitators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Remind postdocs to bring a laptop to this session if it is being held in-person.

Session Outline:

Session Structure	Activity
Warm-up (5 min)	Discussion prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● What challenges have you faced/are you facing in managing projects?● What strategies helped you remain on track or successfully navigate a challenge while managing a project?
Establish a realistic timeline for your chosen project. (25-30 min)	Individual: using the project tracking grid template , identify the main objectives and subtasks of your project. Assign a realistic

	deadline of completion for each task (monthly and/or quarterly).
Identify strategies to ensure the completion of the project. (20-30 min)	<p>Starting in pairs or small groups, discuss the following. Report-out and continue the discussion as a large group.</p> <p>Discussion prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can you involve your collaborators/coworkers in establishing the timeline? • When should you revisit the timeline? • When a task isn't getting done, how would you address the issue to get back on track? • When do you have that conversation? • How would you prioritize tasks when you hit a hurdle? (e.g. a member of the team leaves, the work is delayed, ...)
Wrap-up (5 min)	Encourage participants to continue reviewing and revising their project objectives and timeline independently and with their PI/mentor. Answer any lingering questions and give a short preview of next week's session.

Facilitator Notes and Tips:

- Postdocs more advanced in project management may wish to use this template to create benchmarks or milestones rather than to track the completion of tasks.
- Effort and time on a project, especially from the joint perspectives of budget and time accountability, is a frequent and tricky subject. Consider addressing how to have both individual and group discussions with team members on how to support and create common expectations around effort.

Building Skills for a Successful Career Module 4: Applying Teaching Skills Beyond the Classroom

This module explores how learning and teaching occur in many contexts outside of the classroom and describes effective teaching skills, including how they are applicable in multiple professional scenarios and the value of applying these skills in the workplace.

Developed by: Sarah Hokanson, Bennett Goldberg, Jessica Maher, and Robin Greenler

Module Learning Outcomes:

- Reflect on how learning and teaching occurs in multiple workplace environments;
- Describe a key set of effective teaching skills that are applicable in multiple workplace environments and apply to several professional scenarios;
- Develop an awareness of strategies and construct an approach to apply teaching skills to a career-related activity in one's own context;
- Reflect on the benefits and value of applying learning and teaching skills in the workplace.

Materials / pre-work for the learning community session

Participants	Facilitator
<p><i>Any specific videos, activities, or reflections from the course that are key to session activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Complete the activity "Applying Teaching Skills in Your Career" using this grid.	<p><i>Pre-session materials for facilitators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ If facilitators wish to, they could create and share a Google folder for participants to add their grids in advance (<i>facilitator to add their own link here</i>)

Session Outline:

Session Outcome	Activity
Warm-up (5 mins)	Check in with your PALS and find out how the online course is going for them thus far.

<p>Reflect on the impact of self- and audience-identity in approaching a teaching scenario. (10 mins)</p>	<p>The following activity can be done as a full group, in pairs or small groups.</p> <p>Each person shares one scenario they chose from their Applying Teaching Skills grid. For that scenario, share their response to row 3: “Reflection on self and on audience. What are your roles as an instructor? How are you seen? What identities are most important in this setting? How might the way you are seen impact your instructional approach?”</p> <p>After everyone has presented, discuss as a group.</p>
<p>Develop inclusive learning approaches appropriate for a workplace teaching context that you may encounter in your career path. (10 mins)</p>	<p>The following can be done as a full group, in pairs, small groups, or by dividing people into academic vs non-academic scenario groups.</p> <p>Discuss participant responses from row 6 of their Applying Teaching Skills grid: “Develop and infuse inclusive learning approaches: Describe how the learners might be different. Describe the structural inequities in your workplace environment or disciplinary field.”</p> <p>For the last part of the prompt, consider what you know about structural inequities or how you might learn about the inequities in a new situation?</p>
<p>Develop and critique inclusive learning approaches appropriate for a range of workplace teaching contexts. (15 mins)</p>	<p>Divide into small groups. Each group gets a different scenario (below). What teaching approaches could you apply to this situation to overcome some of the challenges of identity, power and positionality? As a full group, share out and discuss.</p>
<p>Revise and expand teaching activities that utilize an inclusive and active learning approach. Reflect on the efficacy of teaching approaches. (10 mins)</p>	<p>All participants return to the scenario they first presented from their grid. Individually reflect on how to revise or add to the collaborative and active learning approaches originally identified.</p> <p>How might they make those approaches more actively inclusive?</p> <p>Reconvene and share out.</p>

**Wrap-up
(5 min)**

Answer any lingering questions and give a short preview of next week's session.

Teaching Scenarios

1. A group of five undergraduate students join the lab for the summer. They are of varying nationalities, racial and ethnic identities, and genders. They are from a mix of institutional types (large and small, private and public) that are located in geographically diverse places in the US. This is their first day and it is your job to orient them to the lab and the work.
2. You are presenting your work at the annual conference of your disciplinary society. There are about 25 people in the room and the sessions are each 20 minutes long. The audience is a mix of faculty and graduate students, all working in your disciplinary area.
3. You are meeting with your research/lab group to pitch an idea for a new direction your project might go. You will need to describe the idea, justify its value and ground it in the literature. There are seven of you, three graduate students, one other postdoc, one undergraduate student and your advisor.
4. You are pitching an idea for a new project to your boss that you think has potential for some advancement in the lab. You would like to be able to spend up to 10 hours a week on this project. She is not familiar with the technique or the associated literature.

Facilitator Notes and Tips:

- Depending on the size of your group or your level of teaching expertise, you may wish to choose one or two of the reflection activities listed above rather than completing all of them in a single session. You could choose the areas you feel most confident in facilitating or allow your group (or even smaller subgroups) to choose the activities and prompts that are most relevant to them.
- If you have the background and experience, consider facilitating discussion of general principles of backward design, active learning, inclusive practices, etc.

Building Skills for a Successful Career Module 5: Strategic Communications

This module explores the value of strategic communications and the different contexts where those skills can be effectively applied.

Developed by: Sarah Hokanson, Bennett Goldberg, Rique Campa, and Robin Greenler

Module Learning Outcomes:

- Identify the value of strategic communications and the different contexts where it can be effectively applied;
- Describe the And, But, Therefore approach to personal narrative and communication;
- Identify characteristics of a theater-based approach to developing strategic communication skills;
- Apply assets and strengths in a variety of contexts to create practice responses to common interview questions;
- Describe how to review, critique and iteratively improve communicating your experiences, knowledge and narratives.

Materials / pre-work for the learning community session

Participants	Facilitator
<p>Any specific videos, activities, or reflections from the course that are key to session activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Summary of Effective Narrative Structures (ABT method) video	<p>Pre-session materials for facilitators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ ABT worksheet➤ RCTP Oral Communication rubric

Session Outline:

Session Outcome	Activity
Warm-up (5 min)	<p>Prompt: describe a moment where you might have to give a 1-minute pitch that you are concerned/worried about.</p> <p>Facilitators could provide an example of this experience.</p>
Create an elevator pitch using the ABT method.	Individual activity. Using the ABT worksheet ,

(15 minutes)	participants write a response to the prompt “Tell me about your research.” Consider what the context is, who the audience is, and what your goal is as you write your bullets.
Practice and discuss your elevator pitch. (20 minutes)	In small groups of 2 or 3, participants should practice their elevator pitch (60 seconds per person). Once everyone has shared, participants use the RCTP rubric to discuss the process of creating and practicing their pitch.
Reflect on the elevator pitch process. (15 minutes)	Reconvene as a large group, and invite each small group to share something they learned from practicing and reflecting on their pitches with colleagues. Encourage discussion and feedback in the larger group.
Wrap-up (5 min)	Answer any lingering questions and give a short preview of next week’s session.

Facilitator Notes and Tips:

- Make sure to leave ample time for writing and reflection if your group has not kept up with the course material. You could email them in advance to complete the worksheet, which is also found on the edX platform inside the course.
- Prepare 1 or 2 examples you can model to the group. You may choose one that is research or job driven and another that is skill driven.
- Consider, time allowing, to have participants practice their elevator pitch twice, turning first to the left and then to the right, as they likely know each other pretty well by this point.
- Many postdocs will gravitate toward using these pitches to prepare for job interviews. You may decide to split the group up to practice pitching in different contexts, or keep that focus depending on your group and its goals.
- Using an elevator pitch in an interview context might come up this week, and this could offer a good opportunity to discuss the group’s preference for PALS activities the following week. Practicing responses to common interview questions is one option for next week.

Building Skills for a Successful Career Module 6: Finding and Landing the Job

This module explores important strategies for pursuing a career pathway and taking that next step, including application materials and interviews, and creating an action plan for job negotiation.

Developed by: Jessica Maher, Antonio Nunez, and Rick McGee

Module Learning Outcomes:

- Align your experiences and strengths with job descriptions
- Communicate your strengths to key stakeholders (search committees, references, etc)
- Create an action plan for how to approach job negotiation
- Reflect on how to use the skills you've built to be successful in your job

Materials / pre-work for the learning community session

Participants	Facilitator
<p><i>Any specific videos, activities, or reflections from the course that are key to session activities:</i></p> <p>Deconstructing a job description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Basics of an advertised position description ➤ Choose a job description or two video ➤ Introduction to deconstructing a description activity <p>Communicating your strengths: Elements of your job application materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cover letters video ➤ Preparing for your interviews video 	<p><i>Pre-session materials for facilitators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Participants will need to bring their deconstructed job description from the module ➤ Facilitators may choose to bring sample job descriptions from different career sectors, to be used by any participants who do not bring their own

Session Outline:

Session Outcome	Activity
<p>Warm-up (5 min)</p>	<p>Discussion prompt: What part of the job search process seems most daunting at this point? OR Is there anything in particular that you'd like to discuss today?</p>
<p>Debrief the process of deconstructing a job description</p>	<p>Participants should refer back to the table they used to deconstruct a position description.</p>

<p>(15 min)</p>	<p>In small groups, discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which areas of the job description were more challenging to deconstruct? • How well were you able to align your own skills and experiences to the job description? Were there boxes you weren't sure how to fill, or skills you have that you weren't sure how to apply to this job? • What questions do you have about the job search?
<p>Prepare for a job application or interview context. (20 min)</p>	<p>Choose your own adventure!</p> <p>There are two activity options for this section. Participants should use the job descriptions they brought, or facilitators can bring job descriptions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option A: Participants individually <u>outline</u> a cover letter for a specific job description, and share/receive feedback in small groups. • Option B: Using a set of common interview questions (below), participants practice responses in mock interview style, using the context of a specific job description. <p>Participants should join small groups of 2 or 3 to complete one of the above activities. Facilitators could choose which activity to use based on the group needs, or participants could choose based on where they are in their own job search process.</p>
<p>Reflect on how to apply an elevator pitch (Module 5) to a job application process. (10 min)</p>	<p>In module 5, participants drafted and practiced elevator pitches.</p> <p>As a large group, discuss the connections between that activity and preparing for the job market. Discussion prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the elevator pitch activity inform how you develop your job application materials? • How can (or when should) you use these pitches while interviewing? Where do these narratives fit into the interview context?

**Wrap-up
(5-10 min)**

Since this is the final PALS meeting, allow time for discussion related to (a) the course conclusion, (b) how participants plan to leverage what they learned to help them meet their future career goals, and (c) any lingering questions..

Common interview questions:

- Why are you interested in this position?
- Tell me what you bring to this position that will enable you to be successful.
- Give me an example or two of prior accomplishments that you feel the most proud of.
- How would you characterize your perspectives on diversity, equity and inclusion as they relate to the work of this position?
- How does this position fit within your career trajectory goals?
- How does your experience and approach align with the mission of the institution/organization?
- Tell me about a time when you...[insert position responsibility here]
- What are some areas of growth for you in this position?
- If you took this position, after one year what would be the evidence of success that you had a good year?

Facilitator Notes and Tips:

- In order to decide which of the activity options to use, consider asking participants to indicate which part of the job search process they are most interested in exploring further
 - If you are using an email or survey to collect this information prior to the meeting, you could also request that they share any resources they have used for job searching and then collate those resources for the whole group
- For the last activity, the common interview question “tell me about your professional experience relevant to this position” is a great place to utilize an elevator pitch narrative.
- When discussing interviewing, you could elaborate more on the STAR method, which was introduced in this module. STAR is an acronym for **S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction, **R**esult. This structured approach to answering interview questions provides concrete examples versus generic information. Learn more about the STAR method in this [article](#) from The Muse, and consider sharing this article with your participants.
- Responses to frequently asked questions at wrap-up:
 - Participants must complete at least 50% (five of ten) of the required activities, one of which must be in modules 5 or 6, in order to receive a certificate.
 - Free audit track learners will receive a certificate via e-mail from the Postdoc Academy. Paid edX verified learners will receive a certificate from edX.
 - Ask participants to complete the post-course survey as it is important for project data collection.
 - Participants have unlimited access to the course content and materials in their edX dashboard

- Find out if your PALS group would like to stay in touch! Here are a few ways your PALS could maintain a sense of community and expand on their professional development:
 - Meet monthly to follow-up on goals identified during PALS.
 - Create a Slack channel where the group can continue conversations online.
 - Share information about other professional development events on campus, online (e.g. in your disciplinary society), or in the surrounding community and attend as a group if possible.
- The final section of this module discussed negotiation, which may raise questions from participants who have not experienced this process before. Here are some articles about negotiation which may be helpful if this topic comes up in your PALS.
 - Negotiating in life sciences:
 - <https://career.ucsf.edu/phds/academic-careers/negotiating-faculty-position>
 - <https://research.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/61/2018/02/Handout-Negotiating-Offers-for-Faculty-Positions-Feb-2018.pdf>
 - <https://www.science.org/content/article/yes-you-can-and-should-negotiate-academic-job-offers>
 - General negotiation articles:
 - <https://hbr.org/2020/12/negotiating-a-job-offer-heres-how-to-get-what-you-want>
 - <https://hbr.org/2014/04/15-rules-for-negotiating-a-job-offer>
 - Non-academic job negotiations:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dme2fXtewj4>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dme2fXtewj4>

Appendix A: Facilitation Notes

Creating a Supportive Environment

There are also specific steps you can take to create a positive and supportive learning environment.

- Discussing and agreeing on a set of ground rules.
- Making a clear working agreement on confidentiality. This is essential for building relationships of trust within the group.
- Getting to know each other.
- Paying attention to the energy of the group. Maintaining the energy is important. In dealing with difficult and sensitive issues, there is a real possibility that group members will feel overwhelmed. Being creative about ways to maintain the energy is necessary; this may include using warm-ups, energizers, and ice-breakers. Humor is also important. This curriculum addresses serious issues but humor is a useful learning tool in itself – people learn better when they feel more comfortable and relaxed.
- Helping participants keep track of their progress. This can be done by recapping previous sessions and explaining links between learning activities.

Strengthening Core Facilitation Skills

There are some core skills that any good facilitator needs and it is important to reflect on how best to strengthen these core skills, focusing on:

Active Listening: Facilitators need skills in active listening in order to be able to use the tools well with groups. Active listening means more than just listening. It means helping people feel that they are being understood, as well as being heard. Active listening encourages people to be more open in sharing their experiences, thoughts and feelings. Active listening involves:

- Using body language and the face to show interest and understanding. This could include looking at the speaker's eyes, nodding the head, and turning the body to face the speaker;
- Listening not only to what is said but also to how it is said, by paying attention to the speaker's 'body language';
- Asking questions of the person who is speaking in order to show a desire to understand; and
- Summarizing the discussions to check an understanding of what has been said and asking for feedback.

Effective questioning: Being able to ask effective questions is an essential skill for this work. Effective questioning skills are needed in order to help people to better understand the complexity of identity, culture and personal background. Such skills also increase participant's participation in their group's discussions of how to apply what they are learning.

Effective questioning involves:

- Asking open-ended questions, for example using the six key questions (Why? What? When? Where? Who? and How?);
- Asking probing questions: by following participants' answers with further questions that look deeper into the issue or problem;
- Asking clarifying questions by re-wording a previous question;
- Asking questions about personal points of view by asking about how people feel and not just about what they know; and
- It is important that questions are asked in a constructive manner. Facilitators should recognize participants' inputs, especially when participants share their personal reflections.

Key important points that the facilitator should keep in mind:

- Participation: It is important that the facilitator does not dominate the proceedings, but instead creates space and an environment for all participants to share and learn.
- Humility: This is a community learning process. We do not have every answer to every question. We should all recognize the complexity of the topics. There are confusions and doubts.
- Dialogue: The facilitator should foster an environment that encourages participants to share their views. However, being constructive and non-judgmental does not mean that insensitive comments and views can go unchallenged. Statements that devalue others, or give privilege to certain groups should be questioned in a way for further critical reflection.
- Sense of humor: Understanding that the learning process can be challenging and difficult, a sense of humor can help keep the dynamic positive and hopeful. A sense of humor can help ease anxiety and tensions.

Working with Groups

Facilitating group discussions is a basic skill for using this curriculum. This skill is needed in order to increase the participation of people in their group discussions and to ensure that group members are able to express their range of views and interests. Good facilitation skills help to improve the quality of group discussion and problem solving. Such skills can also help groups to agree on changes that are needed and to commit to taking action on these changes. There is no single best way to facilitate a group discussion. Different facilitators have different styles. Different groups have different needs. But there are some key aspects of good group facilitation, which are described below.

- Involving everyone: Helping all group members to take part in the discussion is a really important skill in facilitating a group meeting. This involves paying attention to who is talking a lot and who is not saying much. There may be many reasons why someone is quiet during a group discussion – for example, they may be thinking deeply. But in general, it is a good idea to bring quiet group members into the discussion – for example, by asking them a direct question. On the other hand, if someone is very talkative, it is helpful to ask them to allow others to take part in the discussion.
- Keeping the group on track: A key task for the facilitator is to help the group stay focused on the issues that are being discussed and the objectives for the group discussion. If the group seems to

be losing its focus, it is important to remind group members about the objectives for the activity and the issues that are being looked at. This will help to get them back on track. One of the main tasks of the facilitator is to help the group by guiding its discussion. A good facilitator will use questions to shape the discussion and direct it towards the key learning points and remaining questions.

- **Managing conflict:** Talking about issues of identity and inclusion may well give rise to disagreements within the group. Most people have strongly held views about such issues. Disagreement is very healthy and should be welcomed. It is often through disagreement with others that we come to better understand our own thoughts and feelings. There may however, be situations when disagreement turns into conflict. In a conflict, people put their energy into defending their own fixed positions rather than exploring the issues with each other. Helping the group to manage such conflict is a key role for the facilitator. This is because conflict can make it harder for the group members to do their work together and achieve their objectives. There are many ways to manage conflict. These different ways tend to share some common features, including:
 - Getting people to state their concerns, and the reasons for them, clearly – this reduces the danger of other people making assumptions;
 - Getting people to listen to others carefully – this helps to shift people out of their fixed positions and creates an atmosphere of respect in which it becomes easier to work a conflict out;
 - Getting people to look for areas of agreement and shared concern – this is to create a common ground on which to come together to work a conflict out
- **Dealing with disruptions.** People often take on particular roles when they are in groups. Some of these roles can interfere with the work of the group. Facilitating a group discussion may mean dealing with negative or disruptive people or with someone who continues to interrupt the discussion. Reminding the group of the working agreements and asking everyone to be responsible for maintaining these agreements is a good way to deal with disruptions. It is important to try and involve the group when asking a disruptive group member to help rather than hinder the work of the group. In the most extreme circumstances, when a group member continues to be very disruptive, the facilitator may need to ask this person to leave the group session. In this situation, it is important to arrange to talk with this person later in order to better understand their position and to make a decision about whether they should continue with the group.
- **Achieving agreement:** It will not always be possible to achieve agreement among group members. But a good facilitator will highlight areas of agreement for the group, as well as points of disagreement that need further discussion. The facilitator should also sum up the main points of the discussion and any action points that have been agreed. Participants can agree to constructively disagree. It is important to thank the group for their contributions to the meeting and to celebrate the achievements of the meeting.

Facilitation Notes adapted from East and Southeast Asia regional curriculum on transforming masculinities towards gender justice.

Appendix B: Additional Community Standards

1. Confidentiality. We want to create an atmosphere for open, honest exchange. What is said in the space stays in the space. What is learned in the space can leave the space.
2. Our primary commitment is to learn from each other. We will listen to each other and not talk at each other. We acknowledge differences amongst us in backgrounds, skills, interests, and values. We realize that it is these very differences that will increase our awareness and understanding through this process.
3. Speak from personal experiences. Use “I” statements to share thoughts and feelings. You cannot speak for your group; just because you are does not mean you understand.
4. Do not demean, devalue, or “put down” people for their experiences, lack of experiences, or difference in interpretation of those experiences.
5. Take responsibility for your impact. Our intentions do not negate the negative impact we may have on someone. We will hold ourselves accountable by challenging ourselves to be quick to sincerely apologize and then open to learning when we do not understand.
6. Assume best intentions. Trust that people are doing the best they can and that everyone is attempting to balance being honest, vulnerable, and imperfect with standards of perfection, mastery, and survival.
7. Challenge the idea and not the person. If we wish to challenge something that has been said, we will challenge the idea or the practice referred to, not the individual sharing this idea or practice.
8. Speak your discomfort. If something is bothering you, please share this with the group. Often our emotional reactions to this process offer the most valuable learning opportunities.
9. Monitor your airtime. Be mindful of taking up much more space than others. On the same note, empower yourself to speak up when others are dominating the conversation.
10. Be fully present. Our time together is precious and limited. Everyone at the table has significant contributions to make and we need you to fully participate with both your head and your heart.
11. Redefine the term “Safe Space.” Conflict and discomfort are often a part of growth. Make sure to differentiate between feelings of discomfort and experiences with conflict and being unsafe.

Trust the process. The journey to our destinations offer us the chance to gain insights about ourselves and others. These insights help us grow and change and contribute to our cohesion, offering us opportunities for gratitude and appreciation on the way to goal achievement.