

**Teaching and Learning Goal:** What skill or ability do you want students to acquire? What behavior do you want to change? What knowledge do you want to test? What assumptions (either students’ or the instructor’s) do you want to test? Focus on only one such goal. Students have indicated that the style and format of a philosophical dialogue is sometimes more difficult to understand than a typical philosophical text. My goal is for students to improve their understanding of philosophical dialogues by being able to identify the core arguments, objections, and conclusions, and their relationships to one another. My method includes teaching them the skill of visualizing the dialogue in a sort of network map.

**Teaching Question:** Adapt the teaching and learning goal to a specific course. Make this question narrow and focused so that it can be measured.

Does visualizing/mapping a philosophical dialogue improve students’ overall understanding of the dialogue’s core components (arguments, objections, conclusions)?

**Assessment Technique:** What instrument are you going to use to collect information? Is it simple enough that you know how to analyze the results? Will the information it provides answer the teaching question?

In addition to standard check-ins with students as I move through lecture, I will distribute a pre-lesson questionnaire and a post-lesson questionnaire to gauge teaching effectiveness and achievement of the learning goal. The questionnaire will include qualitative and quantitative questions, as follows:

PRE-LESSON QUESTIONNAIRE	POST-LESSON QUESTIONNAIRE
On a scale of 1 (difficult) to 7 (easy/helpful), how does the dialogical style of the Socratic Dialogues affect your ability to comprehend them?	How was your overall experience with the mapping activity? (1 = disliked it: found it confusing or unhelpful; 7 = liked it: helped me understand a great deal!)
What, if anything, for you is most difficult about understanding a Socratic Dialogue?	How likely are you to try this mapping technique on your own to help understand future dialogues? (nope, unlikely, maybe, likely, definitely)
On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well/nearly 100%), how well do you feel you understood the Lysis as a whole?	Overall do you feel your understanding of the Lysis improved after the mapping activity? (yes, unsure, no)
On a scale of 1 (difficult) to 7 (easy), how easy/difficult was it to follow the thread of the discussion in the Lysis?	In what ways, if at all, did the mapping activity improve your understanding of the Lysis dialogue?
On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well/nearly 100%), how well do you feel you understood the main arguments in the Lysis?	After the lesson, on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well/nearly 100%), how well do you feel you understood the Lysis as a whole?

<p>On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well/nearly 100%), how well do you feel you understood the main objections to the arguments in the Lysis?</p>	<p>After the lesson, on a scale of 1 (difficult) to 7 (easy), how easy/difficult was it to follow the thread of the discussion in the Lysis?</p>
<p>Select any of the following you found to be most difficult to understand: the premises of each argument, the objections, the examples used to justify certain arguments, none of the above (all was clear, or something else)</p>	<p>After the lesson, on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well/nearly 100%), how well do you feel you understood the main arguments in the Lysis?</p>
<p>Based on your previous answer, please elaborate on why and how you found these difficult.</p>	<p>After the lesson, on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well/nearly 100%), how well do you feel you understood the main objections to the arguments in the Lysis?</p>
	<p>Any additional comments, feedback, or suggestions about this activity that you would like to share?</p>

**Classroom Practice: What assignment or activity are you going to use in the class to try to test the question? When are you going to do it? Who will conduct it? Will it be graded? Will it be anonymous or will students sign their names? How long will it take? How will students know what to do with it? Who will explain it? How will the relationship between this assignment and activity and the course be explained?**

To test this question, I will use a Prezi presentation that includes examples of mapping techniques to guide students through the dialogue, and simultaneously through the mapping technique. This classroom activity will take place for most of the hour and twenty-minute guest lecture I will run on 03/23/2020. The activity will not be graded but students will be encouraged to share their final maps in the class Google Drive folder. All questionnaire submissions will be anonymous. I will provide students with general instructions for the lesson plan, and then give detailed instructions during the lesson itself. These instructions will include an explanation for the goals of the lesson and the purpose of the questionnaire: to provide me with helpful feedback on the efficacy of this pedagogical technique. I will not, however, overly specify the aims of the questionnaire so as not to prime students to give primed feedback. The relationship between the activity and the course will be explained in relation to the problem I identified; in other words, I will acknowledge that in the past students have indicated that the dialogical format can prove difficult to understand and distill the core components, and that the intended activity is meant to not only assist with the dialogue for that day (*Lysis*) but for future dialogues, should the technique prove useful for students.

**Summary of Results: What does the information you collected through the assessment instrument tell you about your teaching question?**

Overall the information I collected in the assessment instrument (questionnaires) demonstrates that the answer to my teaching question of whether visualizing/mapping a philosophical dialogue improves students’ overall understanding of the dialogue’s core components (arguments, objections, conclusions) is yes. In every category, students’ self-assessments of understanding improved from before and after the lesson, and the majority of students indicated a positive experience with the activity (5.875/7) and 87.5% said the activity definitely helped improve their overall understanding of the dialogue. The qualitative responses indicate that visual learners greatly appreciated the activity and that students were especially able to see the connections between core concepts.

PRE-LESSON QUESTIONNAIRE	Average Score	POST-LESSON QUESTIONNAIRE	Average Score	Difference
On a scale of 1 (difficult) to 7 (easy/helpful), how does the dialogical style of the Socratic Dialogues affect your ability to comprehend them?	4.125	How was your overall experience with the mapping activity? (1 = disliked it: found it confusing or unhelpful; 7 = liked it: helped me understand a great deal!)	5.875	X
What, if anything, for you is most difficult about understanding a Socratic Dialogue?	1)	How likely are you to try this mapping technique on your own to help understand future dialogues? (nope, unlikely, maybe, likely, definitely)	Nope-0, unlikely-12.5%, maybe-37.5%, likely-12.5%, definitely-37.5%	X
On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well/nearly 100%), how well do you feel you understood the Lysis as a whole?	4.625	After the lesson, on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well/nearly 100%), how well do you feel you understood the Lysis as a whole?	5.75	+1.125 (+16.07%)
On a scale of 1 (difficult) to 7 (easy), how easy/difficult was it to follow the thread of the discussion in the Lysis?	4.25	After the lesson, on a scale of 1 (difficult) to 7 (easy), how easy/difficult was it to follow the thread of the discussion in the Lysis?	5.625	+1.375 (+19.64%)
On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well/nearly 100%), how well do you feel you understood the main arguments in the Lysis?	4.5	After the lesson, on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well/nearly 100%), how well do you feel you understood the main arguments in the Lysis?	6.25	+1.75 (+25%)

On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well/nearly 100%), how well do you feel you understood the main objections to the arguments in the Lysis?	3.75	After the lesson, on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well/nearly 100%), how well do you feel you understood the main objections to the arguments in the Lysis?	6.125	+2.375 (+33.92%)
Select any of the following you found to be most difficult to understand: the premises of each argument, the objections, the examples used to justify certain arguments, none of the above (all was clear, or something else)	Premises (1 vote), objections (3 votes), examples (1 vote), none/else (4 votes)	Overall do you feel your understanding of the Lysis improved after the mapping activity? (yes, unsure, no)	No-0%, unsure-12.5%, yes-87.5%	X
Based on your previous answer, please elaborate on why and how you found these difficult.	2)	In what ways, if at all, did the mapping activity improve your understanding of the Lysis dialogue?	3)	X
		Any additional comments, feedback, or suggestions about this activity that you would like to share?	4)	X

Qualitative Answers:

1) Some sentences are very long./The style itself is not difficult; the abstract nature of the topics as well as the math and logic are uh!/Keeping up with who's talking/Unpacking the long threads of consciousness when someone (usually Socrates) goes into a complex line of reasoning using the same words (usually opposites) over and over relating them in different ways. Knowing what is being endorsed, by whom, and when./Their use of language is different than our modern speech. The flow is different./Understanding when Socrates is being sarcastic/ironic./Following arguments/The complex arguments that seem to run on and on.

2) Plato uses different levels of granularity for seemingly similar things./these kind of texts, like many others, require multiple readings in order to get a good grasp of them./Didn't understand how the arguments related to friendship, or what was trying to be shown./Often the objections were just a reiteration of the conclusion but in different terms, this made it difficult to separate them from what was being endorsed as it often came out as a rephrasing until Socrates said something like, "but of course this is wrong!" /He used examples that were hard to follow/I believe I could follow an argument but couldn't follow/find an objection./When they talk about Hesiod and the argument that Friend is like with Friend argument.

3) It helped visualize the arguments and their flow./It's allowed me to visualize the arguments, objections, and conclusions. Helping me better understand the reading. Also allows me to find missed arguments through collaboration with the class./Writing down the concepts was the most useful part. Also the map seems somewhat of a misnomer because it's actually a sequence./Helped me better understand the arguments and objections for the sake of in section 4 with the infinite regress problem./The visual representation helped to connect certain ideas in my mind./A much greater understanding of the transitions between arguments as well as within the arguments themselves./helped understand the digression of the dialogue/I am a visual learner. Mapping helps me both understand the details and see what the overall picture looks like. Thanks!

4) It might have helped to have a standard way to map it coded already (ie. circle=main point, brackets=objections, etc.) it was difficult to come up with an effective map on my own./Wow!/I liked the way you did instruction with using the presentation and active discussion. The linear conversation of the dialogue also helped a lot over jumping around to understand the narrative and direction the dialogue is going./Very helpful lesson - thank you!/You were professional and concise, as well as personable./Best Zoom Class Session ever!

**Conclusion: What have you learned? What surprised you? What would you do differently? What implications does this have for your future classroom practice?**

Firstly I have learned that students are willing to try new techniques with enthusiasm and effort. I was pleasantly surprised by their engagement, particularly in a philosophy setting where most class activities are discussion-based. I also learned that students consider objections to arguments as the most difficult component to identify in philosophical dialogues. In this category students rating of understanding increased the most of all other questions-by about 34%. What I would do differently is either spend more time at the beginning giving more concrete strategies for how to visualize their maps, or provide a template. I wanted students to feel free to visualize in a way that best suited them, and to flex their creative muscles; however, for a first-time activity, I think I should have provided more scaffolding. For future classroom practices, I will bear more scaffolding in mind with new learning techniques. I will also remember the overall success that this technique had in understanding philosophical dialogues and consider implementing it more regularly in the classroom, perhaps even applying it to other types of philosophical texts.