

Consulting English Dialogue Lab

Realistic field-specific dialogues, role-play variations, and observer checklists

Audience: management consultants, strategy consultants, implementation consultants, analysts, engagement managers, client partners, internal consultants, and advisory teams

Focus: A consulting English curriculum for discovery, hypotheses, stakeholder management, scope, executive recommendations, slide narratives, implementation risk, and client pushback.

Designed for advanced ESL learners who already use professional English and need industry-specific terminology, realistic meetings, role-play pressure, careful pushback, and polished workplace outputs.

Teaching stance: this is language and workplace-communication training, not legal, medical, financial, safety, or regulatory advice. Instructors should connect every scenario to the learner's current company policies, local rules, and approved procedures.

Dialogue Practice Method

Read each exchange once for meaning, once for tone, and once for decision structure. Then replace the ESL learner line with a version from the learner's own workplace.

1. Client Discovery and Problem Definition

Setting

A client asks for a benchmark study but describes a decision problem.

Speaker	Line
Client partner	Sell the requested benchmark.
Client executive	Decision question, stakeholders, constraints, and expected use of analysis need clarification.
ESL learner	I understand the goal, but we need to separate urgency from control. For this decision, I need to confirm discovery, problem statement, the owner, and the evidence standard before we commit.
Client partner	What would let us move forward without slowing everything down?
ESL learner	Let's document the assumption, define the risk trigger, and create a short discovery question guide. Then we can decide whether to proceed, escalate, or revise the plan.

Language notes

- The learner names the field-specific control point instead of giving a vague no: discovery, problem statement.
- The response preserves the business goal while adding evidence, owner, and next-step discipline.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

- Did the learner name the decision and the risk?
- Did the learner use at least two industry terms accurately?
- Did the learner give a concrete next step without overpromising?

2. Hypotheses and Issue Trees

Setting

The team has limited data but needs a workplan.

Speaker	Line
Engagement manager	Analyze everything.
Analyst	Hypotheses, issue tree, prioritization, and evidence plan should focus effort.
ESL learner	I understand the goal, but we need to separate urgency from control. For this decision, I need to confirm hypothesis, issue tree, the owner, and the evidence standard before we commit.
Engagement manager	What would let us move forward without slowing everything down?

Speaker	Line
ESL learner	Let's document the assumption, define the risk trigger, and create a short issue-tree workplan. Then we can decide whether to proceed, escalate, or revise the plan.

Language notes

- The learner names the field-specific control point instead of giving a vague no: hypothesis, issue tree.
- The response preserves the business goal while adding evidence, owner, and next-step discipline.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

- Did the learner name the decision and the risk?
- Did the learner use at least two industry terms accurately?
- Did the learner give a concrete next step without overpromising?

3. Data Requests and Client Burden

Setting

The consulting team sends a long data request to a busy client.

Speaker	Line
Consultant	Ask for everything just in case.
Client data owner	Data relevance, owner, confidentiality, deadline, and burden need management.
ESL learner	I understand the goal, but we need to separate urgency from control. For this decision, I need to confirm data request, confidentiality, the owner, and the evidence standard before we commit.
Consultant	What would let us move forward without slowing everything down?
ESL learner	Let's document the assumption, define the risk trigger, and create a short data request prioritization. Then we can decide whether to proceed, escalate, or revise the plan.

Language notes

- The learner names the field-specific control point instead of giving a vague no: data request, confidentiality.
- The response preserves the business goal while adding evidence, owner, and next-step discipline.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

- Did the learner name the decision and the risk?
- Did the learner use at least two industry terms accurately?
- Did the learner give a concrete next step without overpromising?

4. Slide Storylines and Executive Synthesis

Setting

A deck has many charts but no decision narrative.

Speaker	Line
Principal	Add more detail.
Consultant	So-what, implication, recommendation, and decision ask must be explicit.
ESL learner	I understand the goal, but we need to separate urgency from control. For this decision, I need to confirm storyline, so what, the owner, and the evidence standard before we commit.
Principal	What would let us move forward without slowing everything down?
ESL learner	Let's document the assumption, define the risk trigger, and create a short executive storyline. Then we can decide whether to proceed, escalate, or revise the plan.

Language notes

- The learner names the field-specific control point instead of giving a vague no: storyline, so what.
- The response preserves the business goal while adding evidence, owner, and next-step discipline.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

- Did the learner name the decision and the risk?
- Did the learner use at least two industry terms accurately?
- Did the learner give a concrete next step without overpromising?

5. Scope Management and Change Requests

Setting

A client asks for an additional market study mid-project.

Speaker	Line
Engagement manager	Do it to keep the client happy.
Client sponsor	Scope, timeline, budget, value, and tradeoff need a formal conversation.
ESL learner	I understand the goal, but we need to separate urgency from control. For this decision, I need to confirm scope, change request, the owner, and the evidence standard before we commit.
Engagement manager	What would let us move forward without slowing everything down?
ESL learner	Let's document the assumption, define the risk trigger, and create a short scope-change response. Then we can decide whether to proceed, escalate, or revise the plan.

Language notes

- The learner names the field-specific control point instead of giving a vague no: scope, change request.
- The response preserves the business goal while adding evidence, owner, and next-step discipline.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

- Did the learner name the decision and the risk?
- Did the learner use at least two industry terms accurately?
- Did the learner give a concrete next step without overpromising?

6. Difficult Client Feedback

Setting

A client says the recommendation is not practical.

Speaker	Line
Client executive	Defend the model.
Consultant	Implementation constraints, assumptions, and client knowledge should be integrated.
ESL learner	I understand the goal, but we need to separate urgency from control. For this decision, I need to confirm assumption, implementation constraint, the owner, and the evidence standard before we commit.
Client executive	What would let us move forward without slowing everything down?
ESL learner	Let's document the assumption, define the risk trigger, and create a short feedback recovery plan. Then we can decide whether to proceed, escalate, or revise the plan.

Language notes

- The learner names the field-specific control point instead of giving a vague no: assumption, implementation constraint.
- The response preserves the business goal while adding evidence, owner, and next-step discipline.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

- Did the learner name the decision and the risk?
- Did the learner use at least two industry terms accurately?
- Did the learner give a concrete next step without overpromising?

7. Implementation and Change Management

Setting

Leadership approves a new operating model but managers resist.

Speaker	Line
Implementation lead	Tell managers the decision is final.

Speaker	Line
Business unit manager	Change story, incentives, decision rights, training, and adoption metrics matter.
ESL learner	I understand the goal, but we need to separate urgency from control. For this decision, I need to confirm operating model, change management, the owner, and the evidence standard before we commit.
Implementation lead	What would let us move forward without slowing everything down?
ESL learner	Let's document the assumption, define the risk trigger, and create a short implementation risk brief. Then we can decide whether to proceed, escalate, or revise the plan.

Language notes

- The learner names the field-specific control point instead of giving a vague no: operating model, change management.
- The response preserves the business goal while adding evidence, owner, and next-step discipline.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

- Did the learner name the decision and the risk?
- Did the learner use at least two industry terms accurately?
- Did the learner give a concrete next step without overpromising?

8. Steering Committees and Final Readouts

Setting

Executives disagree during the final readout.

Speaker	Line
Partner	Keep presenting the slides.
Executive sponsor	Decision rights, options, risks, and next-step ownership need facilitation.
ESL learner	I understand the goal, but we need to separate urgency from control. For this decision, I need to confirm steering committee, option set, the owner, and the evidence standard before we commit.
Partner	What would let us move forward without slowing everything down?
ESL learner	Let's document the assumption, define the risk trigger, and create a short steering committee close. Then we can decide whether to proceed, escalate, or revise the plan.

Language notes

- The learner names the field-specific control point instead of giving a vague no: steering committee, option set.
- The response preserves the business goal while adding evidence, owner, and next-step discipline.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

- Did the learner name the decision and the risk?
- Did the learner use at least two industry terms accurately?
- Did the learner give a concrete next step without overpromising?