

Fishbowl

Purpose:

To promote active listening, critical thinking, and inclusive dialogue by allowing students to observe and engage in structured academic conversation through rotating roles of speakers and observers.

Step-by-Step Protocol:

1. Set Up (2–3 minutes)

Arrange chairs in two concentric circles. The inner circle (4–6 students) participates in the discussion while the outer circle observes and takes notes.

2. Launch the Discussion (1–2 minutes)

Present a central question or topic to the inner circle. This should be open-ended and thought-provoking.

3. Inner Circle Discussion (8–10 minutes)

Students in the inner circle engage in a collaborative discussion using evidence and respectful dialogue. Encourage students to build on each other's ideas and refer to the text or content.

4. Outer Circle Observation (During discussion)

Students in the outer circle listen carefully and take notes on the conversation. They may focus on both content and discussion habits (e.g., use of evidence, tone, clarity).

Fishbowl

5. Rotate or Use Hot Seat (2–3 minutes)

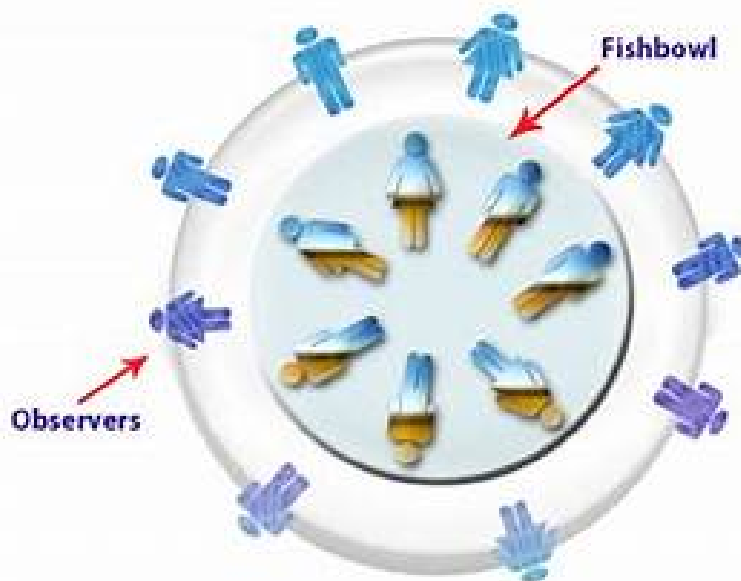
Switch roles so that new students join the inner circle. Optionally, allow outer circle students to use a 'hot seat' to briefly join the conversation.

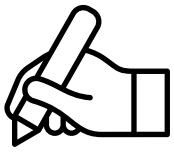
6. Debrief & Reflect (5 minutes)

Students reflect on what they learned from both roles. They write a brief reflection on how the discussion influenced their thinking.

Optional Extensions:

- Use a checklist for speaking and listening behaviors (e.g., “Used evidence,” “Asked a question,” “Built on someone else’s idea”).
- Assign specific roles to observers (e.g., idea tracker, evidence monitor).
- Record discussions for self-assessment or peer feedback.





FISHBOWL



Name: _____

Date: _____

Text/Topic: _____

Role (circle one): Inner Circle | Outer Circle

If Inner Circle:

Key points I contributed:

1. _____

2. _____

Ideas shared by others that influenced my thinking:

If Outer Circle:

What did you observe about the conversation? (e.g., tone, use of evidence, clarity)

Noteworthy ideas or arguments from the discussion:

1. _____

2. _____

Reflection:

What did you learn or take away from this activity?
