



Student Tasks:

- Read and respond to discussion prompt or questions
- Move desks and chairs
- Take notes while in the outer circle; discuss when in the inner circle
- Small group to large group debrief and share-out

Online ThinkCERCA Modules:

- Prepare for discussion using prompts from the text and unit.

→ [Editable Template](#)

Fishbowl

A variation on Socratic Discussions, in which students take turns participating in and observing rigorous inquiry-based discussion.

Suggested Time: Approximately 20 minutes (initial implementation will take 45 to allow for modeling, training, and reflection).

Rationale/Research Base

This practice builds comprehension and critical thinking, as well as discussion skills, through participation, observation, and reflection on effective discussion.

Optimal Application Notes:

Fishbowl discussions can be tailored based on class sizes and age groups. Students newer to the practice will need more direction and support as they learn and reinforce norms with peers.

Before:

- Determine the topic or questions.
- Distribute graphic organizers to use during the discussion.
- Provide students time to answer prompts or jot down notes in preparation for the discussion.
- Arrange your room so there is a group of four desks or four seats at a table in the middle of a circle.
- The remaining students will form an outer circle.
- Ask for four volunteers to sit in the center.

During:

- The inner circle will discuss the prompt or questions.
- The outer circle will be silent and take notes on the content on of the discussion. They should also take notes on the discussion skills and practices that they observe.
- Switch out students between inner and outer circles throughout the fishbowl. You can switch them out one at a time or the entire group at once. Every student should have an opportunity to speak.

After:

- (Today) In small groups and then as a whole class, debrief the content of the discussion and the fishbowl process. Ask what went well and what could be improved next time to make the process smoother.
- (Future lessons) With practice, students will be able to switch in and out without your guidance.

Scaffolds & Supports:

- Have students ask questions about the process before practicing.
- Show a video of a fishbowl discussion in action.

CLASS DISCUSSION

Fishbowl

Topic/question: _____

My discussion preparation:

thoughts/ideas/points, etc.

During the discussion I heard:

My thoughts/reactions: