

Fishbowl

Goals

Fishbowl can provide an opportunity to model a process or concept and can afford groups of students the opportunity to talk and/or listen.

Uses

A fishbowl can also be used as a structure for Socratic Seminars, in which the inner circle of students participates in a discussion and the outer circle of students listens and takes notes. Later, the outer-circle students can comment on the discussion using their notes and can then exchange places with the inner-circle students to continue the discussion.

Instructional Steps

1. Divide the class into equal two groups—one group to be the inner circle (the fishbowl, which will possibly be demonstrating an activity or process) and one group to form the outer circle, which will surround and observe the inner circle. (Note: group size will vary depending on student needs and lesson modifications.)
2. Arrange the two groups into concentric circles and ask the two groups to sit facing the center of the inner circle (the fishbowl).
3. Give the outer circle a specific listening and recording task to complete while they observe the activity that takes place in the fishbowl.
4. Ask the fishbowl group to complete an activity (be sure that they understand the directions for the activity and how they are to proceed).
5. The fishbowl group engages in the activity, demonstrating it to the rest of the class in the outer circle. Facilitate as necessary, clarifying and correcting the activity steps with the fishbowl group.
6. Debrief with the entire class.