

Enhancing Student Engagement with Fishbowl Discussions

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Why Use Classroom Discussion?

What is a Fishbowl Discussion?

My Context

My Process

Why Use Classroom Discussion?

If the objectives of a course are to promote long-term retention of information, to motivate students toward further learning, to allow students to apply information in new settings, or to develop students' thinking skills, then discussion is preferable to lecture

(McKeachie et al. 1986)

Learning is not a spectator sport.
Students must talk about what they are
learning, write about it, relate it to past
experiences, apply it to their daily lives.
They must make what they learn part
of themselves.

(Chickering and Gamson, 1987, p. 3)

First-generation students who report more participation in group discussion, presentations, performances, research projects, and group projects, and who more frequently discuss courses with other students, had higher probability of success.

(Amelink 2005)

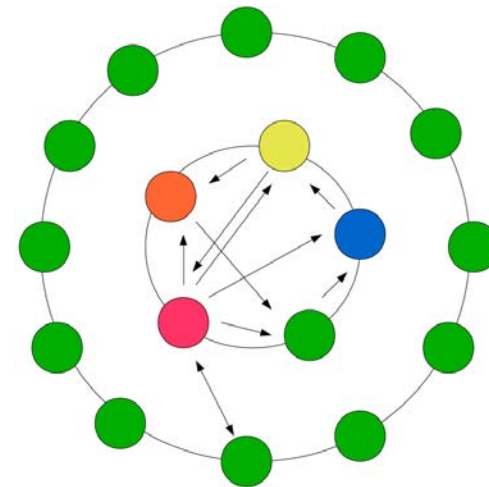
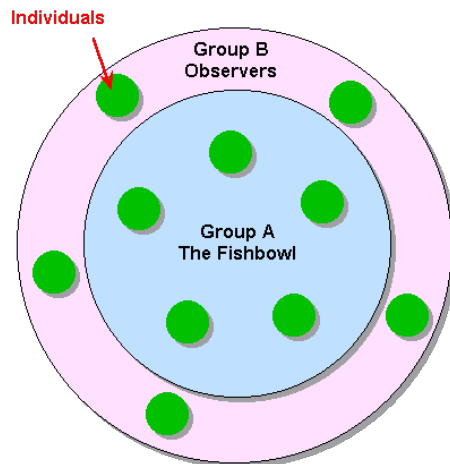
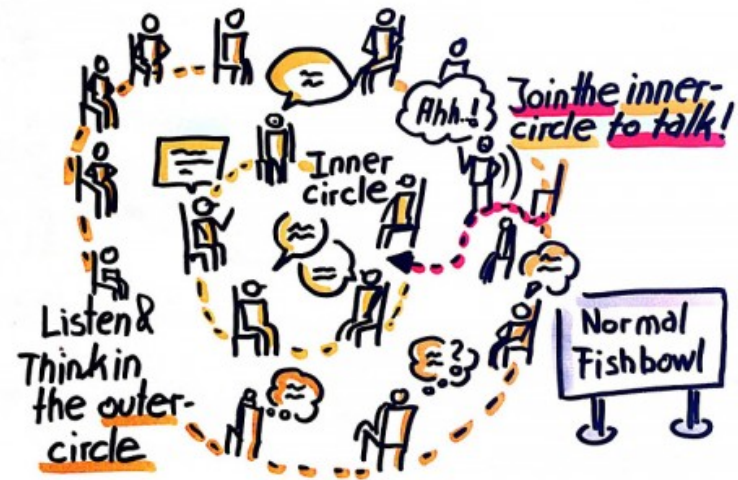
Neuroscience, biology, and cognitive science research have made it clear that the one who does the work does the learning

Doyle (2011)

What is a Fishbowl Discussion?

Fishbowl Discussions

- Part of the group actively discusses while the rest of the group observes
- Typically set up with the discussion in an inner circle and observers in an outer circle
- Several variations for the specific nature of the roles



Giving all Students an Opportunity to Contribute

- Providing a seat in the inner circle for observers to join the discussion
- Switching roles after specified time
- Allowing observers to tag in when they want to contribute to the discussion

My Context - AGED 403/603
Supervision of Work Experience
and Youth Organizations

Student Profile

- Junior and senior level agricultural education majors
- Initial teaching licensure track MS students
- Others interested in 4-H youth development careers
- Average of 20 students – Range of 12 to 30

Course Outline

- Work Based Learning
- Supervised Agricultural Experience
- 4-H
- FFA

Other Factors

- Writing Intensive
- Classroom Layout



My Process

Overview

- 3 – 5 discussions per semester based on enrollment
- Students sign up for the day and topic they will be discussing
- 4 – 7 students per topic based on enrollment
- Panel & audience format



Panel Member Expectations

- Research the topic and write a 2-3 page position paper
- Give a 30 second opening statement
- Discuss within the panel for 15 minutes
- Discuss with the audience for 15 minutes
- Give a 1 minute closing statement
- Complete a self evaluation

Audience Member Expectations

- Actively listen and take notes
- Write an audience paper
 - Summary table of costs and benefits from the discussion
 - Evaluation of costs and benefits
 - Additional costs and benefits
 - Recommendation

My Tasks

- Determine dates and topic statements
All students should be required to complete at least one work based learning experience to graduate from high school
- Provide expectations
- Moderate discussion by keeping time
- Record panel member's participation

Fishbowl Discussions

- Effective method for classroom discussion
- Very adaptable
- Many resources available

Thank you!

Questions?