

Title: Fishbowl

Fishbowl is an active-learning strategy in which some students engage together, while other students watch, like when people look in on fish in a fishbowl.

Step 1: A few students form a small group, often in the center of the room. They engage together in solving a problem or answering a prompt. The rest of the group observes.

Seven gray silhouettes labeled observers are outside a circle. Inside the circle are 3 black silhouettes labeled participants.

Step 2: Often, the observers will then talk through what they saw, amongst other observers or as part of the large group. Pick a new group of participants and the process can repeat.

Seven silhouettes, some black, some gray labeled observers are outside a circle. Inside the circle are 3 gray silhouettes labeled participants. The participants from the first group moved outside the circle and new participants were drafted from the original group of observers.

What are the benefits of a fishbowl?

- Students may gain confidence from watching others interact.
- Fishbowls ensure that no one student takes up all the talking time.
- Fishbowls encourage all students to have an opinion when it's their turn.
- Fishbowls don't require a debrief between each group, so participant groups can cycle in and out of the center as conversation lulls.

What are the caveats of a fishbowl?

- Fishbowls can be really awkward, especially if participants are unsure.
- Shy students may feel put on the spot when it is their turn.
- If students are unprepared, it may be really obvious and stressful.

Fishbowls can be great for role-play and modeling study skills!