

"THE FISHBOWL"

CLASS DISCUSSION TECHNIQUE

Five seats are placed, in a circle, in the center of the room.

All other seats are pushed to the walls for seating for non-participants.

The five students in the circle, the fishbowl, are the only ones allowed to speak in the room. There is to be no conversation outside of the circle. The teacher chooses the first students in the circle, at random.

The students engage in debate on an issue presented, as an open-ended question, by the teacher.

All participants must abide by the rules of civic discussion. These rules are provided in the discussion rubric.

The participants must also operate under the standards of common courtesy. (No yelling, no interrupting, no name-calling, etc.)

Once a student in the circle has spoken, a student from outside the circle may come and tap that student. The student in the circle must then give the one who tapped them their seat and return to the outside observation seats. The new entrant may not be tapped until he or she has spoken at least once.

Students, once removed from the circle, may return at any time. (They may not be tapped until they have spoken again) The teacher may grant preferential seating to students who have not yet participated in the debate.

The teacher does not participate in the discussion except to provide a new question or to terminate an irrelevant, or inappropriate, line of discussion.

Discussion Rubric (SS100505)