## Fishbowl

A fishbowl activity is a structured discussion in which learners either participate actively in discussion or observe the discussion. Learners exercise their communication skills and practice active listening.

1. Present learners with a topic or stimulus to instigate discussion.
2. Set up the room with two concentric circles of chairs (each circle should have enough chairs to seat half the group of learners).
3. Divide learners into two groups: a discussion group and an observation group.
4. Present learners with the topic or stimulus and offer a short period of time to prepare for the discussion.
5. Remind learners of the protocols for respectful discussion.
6. Seat the discussion group in the inner circle and the observation group in the outer circle.
7. The inner circle of students discusses the topic while the outer circle observes the discussion and takes notes if appropriate.
8. As the discussion progresses learners can either:
   * Switch roles after a set period of time, so that the outer circle moves to the inner circle and commences their own discussion.
   * Switch roles when each learner is ready – learners in the outer circle can tap their inner-circle ‘partner’ on the shoulder when they are ready to switch and join the discussion.
9. After the discussion, facilitate a reflection session where learners consider what they learned and evaluate their performance as listeners and participants.

### Fishbowl adapted for students learning from home

Fishbowl discussions work best when learners have face-to-face contact that enable active listening and respectful discussion. Video conferencing tools will enable learners to engage in fishbowl activities while remaining physically distant. It is advised that teachers access the department’s [guidelines for the use of live video with students](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/learning-from-home/media/documents/guidelines-to-support-schools-using-live-video-with-students.pdf) before leading this activity. The following modifications ensure that fishbowl activities can succeed while students are learning from home:

1. Send group placements (Discussion or Observation group) and discussion stimulus to learners via email or digital classroom.
2. Use a video conferencing tool such as [Zoom](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Card/603#.Xo-uPd6ix4E.link) to facilitate discussion.
   * Instruct all learners to mute their microphones.
   * Learners in the Discussion group can use Zoom’s hand-raising function to indicate when they want to speak, then unmute their microphones only while speaking.
3. Learners in the Observation group can use Zoom’s chat function to comment on the discussion as it progresses, or pose questions to the Discussion group.
4. Teachers can use Zoom’s poll function to create a self-reflection form for all learners to complete at the end of the activity.

**Alternative digital tools**

* [Microsoft Teams](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Card/117#.XpUGFZgY2zI.link) video meetings could be used in place of Zoom.
* A text-based Fishbowl discussion could be facilitated using the chat function in a digital classroom such as [Google Classroom](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Card/27#.XpUGFTjbd5A.link).