



SEI Newsletter

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Dear Amherst Learning Community:

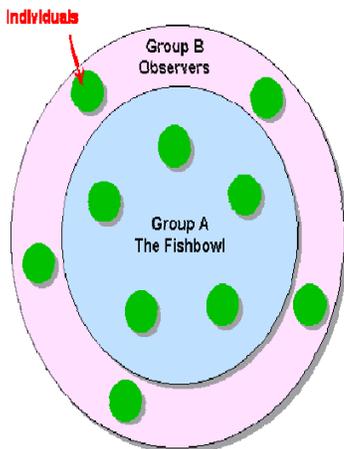
In an effort to continuously improve our instruction for the English Learners in our district, we've partnered in a professional practice goal to send a periodic, district-wide SEI (Sheltered English Immersion) Newsletter. This newsletter will include resources and instructional strategies that may be beneficial for K-12 ELL students (as well as other struggling learners) in your classroom, and will highlight ways to explicitly teach and practice language skills as an integral part of content learning. We appreciate your efforts and creativity in meeting the needs of our linguistically diverse student population and hope that these newsletters will offer ideas for your classroom and spark collegial conversation about effective SEI practices. If you have any questions, suggestions or feedback, please feel free to email us at hallm@arps.org or richardsonkn@arps.org.

Sincerely,

Monica Hall and Katie Richardson

Fishbowl Strategy

The Fishbowl Strategy



At a glance:

<http://www.peterpappas.com/files/fishbowl-discussion.pdf>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFr9iLY7zdc>

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<http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/activities/fishbowl.html>

<http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/otai/Fishbowl.asp>

<https://www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/teaching-strategies/fishbowl>



Fishbowl Procedures

Goals: Improve conversation skills, promote academic language use and deepen content knowledge

Procedures:

1. Select an important content topic worth discussing, ideally a question that does not have one correct answer. Make sure students are familiar with the topic, and pre-teach key academic vocabulary and language structures.
2. Set up a circle of chairs (the fishbowl) with enough room around the circle for the remaining students to observe. The class can be split equally into speakers and observers, or the speakers can be just a small group of students. (With younger students, you may want to have them on the rug and invite 2-4 students to sit in front.)
3. Allow students time to prepare ideas and questions in advance. Provide an opportunity for students (especially ELLs) to think and talk about the discussion question first with a peer before entering into the fishbowl activity to allow opportunity to practice expressing ideas and bolstering confidence.
4. Discuss norms and rules of the fishbowl discussion. Will you use the “tap” system where students can rotate in and out of the middle circle? Will you tell students when to switch? Will only one group be in the middle on a given day? Regardless of the rules, make sure they are explained and explicit.
5. Provide target vocabulary and ask students to use it. This could be in the form of a personal or class word bank, a wordsplash, a student-generated list, etc.
6. Engage students in a discussion. The teacher/student facilitator only intervenes if necessary. Every one has a turn to talk. Teach ways to build on others’ ideas. (Young children can physically ‘build’ a conversation by adding a unifix cube each time they speak.)
7. Debrief. Ensure accountability by asking students to 1) respond to the effectiveness of the discussion [to build metalinguistic/metacognitive skills] and 2) summarize the discussion (to build content and vocabulary). For younger students or lower level ELs, you might ask them to state if/how their opinion changed or to write a summary sentence that answers the original discussion question. You can also provide a sentence frame for this response. For older or more advanced students, you might ask them to write a more detailed summary of the major points.

Variations:

- You may want to show students a model academic conversation, and/or critique a conversation. This could be done using a video, or you could write a few conversations to model or record with a colleague(s).
- Assign perspectives on a topic to make sure different sides are represented.
- **Carefully consider the supports your students will need to make the most of this activity.** Would a graphic organizer be appropriate? Will you use a rubric to discuss conversation skills?