

from the conversation had by Group #1. (15–20 minutes)

7. The same process will occur with the inner circle now becoming the outer circle, and the facilitator assigned to Group #2 will lead the discussion. This time, the discussion should focus on the second half of readings assigned for that session, which were not covered in the first circle. Group #1 will then engage in the same observatory tasks as Group #2 did the first round. (15–20 minutes)
8. Group #2 participant facilitator will close the discussion and the two circles will then organize into a large group. The facilitators will engage their peers in a discussion on how the readings covered in both rounds speak to one another (15–20 minutes).

Facilitator Notes:

- It is highly encouraged to do this activity in a longitudinal form (over the entirety of the semester/quarter) as participants will become more familiar with each other overtime, which as a byproduct may elicit growth in their comfort with and ability to improve facilitate group dialogues.
- Using the discussion pedagogy, educators need to diversify the types of questions asked. In other words, have a mix of questions that elicit both high and low-level responses.
- Educators should be active participants in the discussion, focused on listening and fostering the sharing of diverse viewpoints/perspectives.
- This activity should be done with a class of 10–30. If you have more than 30 participants, consider doing this activity in four circles with four facilitators.
- As you are engaging participants in the activity debrief, be sure to acknowledge the differences in brave vs. safe spaces. Note, “safety” is not necessarily simultaneously conferred based on identities (e.g., race, class, ability, status, etc.) (Bacchetta, Tayeb, & Haritaworn, 2015). Therefore, the use of the term, “brave spaces” serves as a more accurate depiction of what is intended for environments of various communities to share openly with others (Ali, 2017).
- For the observations taken during the Fish Bowl Activity, the point is not to make assumptions. Rather, the goal is to bring the interactions observed to the space for the group to discuss.

References

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TALKING POPSICLE STICKS

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Discussion, Cocurricular Instructional

By engaging in a structured process to progress discussion, participants can consider their own and others' contributions to the conversation in a reflective manner. This can lead to important conversation about how a learning environment is shaped by who speaks, how frequently some participants speak, and/or some participants remain silent, and the power of experiential observation and reflection on how and why these normative practices unfold (Adams, 2007; Beatty & Tillapaugh, 2017; Mahoney, 2016). This learning activity provides an opportunity for participants to consider personal and others' contributions.

Learning Outcomes:

Participants will have opportunities to:

- reflective on observations about the process of a discussion activity.
- identify who is contributing most and least in the conversation and why.

Setting Up the Activity:

- Group size: 10–30 participants
- Time: 60 minutes–1 hour 15 minutes
- Materials: Popsicle sticks, three per participant.

Instructions:

1. Set up (5–10 min)
 - Separate large group into groups of 4–6 participants.
 - Hand out three Popsicle sticks to each participant.

- Give each group discussion questions on a sheet of paper or projected on a screen.
- Facilitator should share the following to explain the Popsicle sticks and the structure of the discussion:
 - You and your group should discuss the following questions from our reading.
 - * Before you begin the discussion, please place your three Popsicle sticks in front of you.
 - * Each time you speak (no matter what you say) you should place a Popsicle stick in the center of the table.
 - * Once you have used your three Popsicle sticks, you cannot rejoin the conversation until everyone in your group has used all of their Popsicle sticks. Your job is to listen and observe the discussion as it progresses.
 - * Once everyone has used all three sticks, everyone in the group regains three sticks again and may start over with the same process.

2. Discussion (30 minutes)

- The group should continue using this structure for 30 minutes while discussing the questions regarding the course content.

3. Debriefing (30–40 minutes)

- Facilitators may debrief this activity in a variety of formats.
- First, to allow for reflection time for all learners, provide participants 3–5 minutes for written reflection on what happened in their group. This can be guided by specific questions or by simply allowing space for open reflection. Next, consider if your participant group would better reflect initially in small or large groups. It may be helpful to maintain the small group environment but change groups for participants to share what they experienced.
- Finally, the facilitator may choose to open the observation and debriefing of the activity to the large group. Please anticipate and notice, again, *who* is speaking and not speaking in this large group space. Debriefing questions could include:
 - What did you observe in the Popsicle activity? Who spoke first/last? Who used their sticks first or last? Did the same people use their Popsicle sticks first/last in each round?
 - How did this activity make you feel? Was it more difficult to speak or not speak? Why?

- What did you observe about the ideas presented in your group? Did you feel like you were able to hear from everyone? Did the Popsicles help or hinder the ability to have an active discussion?

- The Popsicle sticks may also be utilized in large group debrief. In this format, participants again have three sticks in front of them. However, once a participant has spoken one time, they may not use another stick until everyone in the group has also used at least one stick. This constructs the debrief conversation to also be a space for all voices to be heard and to continue the observation process. However, it can also inhibit a more dynamic discussion during debriefing by enforcing a more stringent structure.

Facilitator Notes:

- It is important facilitators are watching each group throughout the activity to bring up your own observations, encouraging participants who usually contribute excessively to consider what this means, and alternatively encouraging reflection and sharing from participants who rarely offer their voice.
- Topics of identity, especially gender identity and race, will likely arise as participants notice who tended to speak first/most or last/least. Be prepared with research to support the conversation in helping participants consider why more men, White people, or other privileged identities tend to dominate discussion.
- The activity may also be implemented in a shorter timeline by shortening the discussion time, using the Popsicle sticks directly in a debriefing, or allowing participants to reflect on their observations of the experience outside of the learning space in written formats such as reflection papers or an online discussion board.

References:

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