CHAPTER 8.

FISHING FOR ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

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In this chapter, the authors describe the **Fishbowl Technique** *used in online, real-time learning; online, any time learning; and hybrid learning. Specifically, an online "fishbowl technique" builds community while preparing students with academic skills such as comprehension, summarizing, critical thinking, text or grammar analysis for undergraduate writing tasks. In describing their "better practice," this chapter addresses the themes of practices in motion across teaching and learning modalities and practices adapted from classic composition strategies.*

FRAMEWORKS AND PRINCIPLES IN THIS CHAPTER

- **Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing, Critical Thinking:** The ability to analyze a situation or text and make thoughtful decisions based on that analysis, through writing, reading, and research.
- **Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing, Rhetorical Knowledge**: The ability to analyze and act on understandings of audiences, purposes, and contexts in creating and comprehending texts.
- **Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing, Writing Processes:** Multiple strategies to approach and undertake writing and research.
- **Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing, Knowledge of Conventions:** The formal and informal guidelines that define what is considered to be correct and appropriate, or incorrect and inappropriate, in a piece of writing.
- **PARS Online Writing Instruction,** Personal: Building community and fostering connections.
- **PARS Online Writing Instruction, Strategic:** Focusing on the student experience and plan for what students will need to be successful in achieving the learning outcomes.
- **GSOLE Principle 3.4:** Instructors and tutors should migrate and/ or adapt appropriate reading, alphabetic writing, and multimodal

composition theories from traditional instructional settings to their OLI environments.

GUIDING QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU BEGIN READING

- Are you seeking new, interactive teaching practices for your curriculum?
- How is it possible for students to conduct their own meaningful, online discussions based on reading texts?
- Will implementing a new hybrid practice into a course create more work for me?

INTRODUCTION

I could feel my heart racing as the whole class looked at me. My eyes darted around the room connecting with a handful of students as I held a wedding-like grin on my face that I hoped conveyed some sense of reassurance; nobody said a word. We all sat in complete, uncomfortable silence. The clock continued to tick and, still, nothing was uttered from anyone. *Do I continue to let the air hang thick with the quiet or do I interject my two cents?* This was one of my first struggles with the fishbowl activity (an adaptation of the Socratic method of discussion), allowing the awkward, silent reflection time for students to organize their thoughts before sharing in the class discussion. I remember telling my colleague Ingrid about this struggle and she gave me some simple, yet powerful advice, "I don't make eye contact with the class. If I look down at my papers on my desk, they don't look to me to break the silence."

Amazingly, the next time I assigned a fishbowl lesson in class this strategy worked wonders. By looking down, I was removed from the focus of the class and the students took more ownership of the discussion. Their ideas began to ping-pong around the group. The topic of the discussion began to branch off; students were debating access to education and how much financial wealth plays a role in an avenue to higher education. They were expressing their own personal experiences and opinions based on the concepts presented in the reading. These were the components that would be the backbone for their writing assignment. But what would it look like without me present? Could the students conduct a self-guided asynchronous discussion online? Would they be able to conduct Socratic seminar-styled groups from behind a computer screen? How would the student discussions flow if they are all in a Zoom meeting and not seated next to one another? How could I take this **in-person, real-time learning** lesson and make it **hybrid**?

WHAT IS THE FISHBOWL TECHNIQUE?

The classic structure of a fishbowl for engaging in class readings in the **in-person** classroom begins by dividing the class into observers and speakers (see Figure 8.1) who then swap roles. The observers build on the first discussion they witnessed once they become the speakers. After both discussions, the observers all complete a follow-up written task which creates a bridge to writing. The follow-up task (also known as the audience task) is assessed on either completion, organization, clarity, or correct grammar. For instance, students might be asked to summarize the main idea or three new insights they gained from a fishbowl discussion they witnessed from the outer circle, while taking notes as an audience member.

Figure 8.1. In traditional classrooms, an inner and outer circle form the fishbowl and observers. Instructors sit in the inner circle.

As we, Ingrid and Briana, began teaching the hybrid class, we renamed the fishbowl practice peer *discussion groups* and set up a consistent 10-week asynchronous process for an **online, any time** class with members rotating into different groups. A key challenge was finding a way to maintain a text-driven conversation and accountability despite the shift to student-led fishbowls. As students led their own text-based discussions in our **online, any time** learning

adaptation, with the usual written follow-up tasks, each group was invited to participate in one of their Zoom discussions (preferably early in the quarter) and to record their other discussions for credit. By watching these recordings, the instructors listen to students' analyses and create subsequent writing prompts directly built from the discussions. While attending one meeting per group, Ingrid was also able to model a text-driven conversation with deeper questioning and listening techniques during the fishbowl discussions that she participated in. Interestingly, in the **online, any time** format, Ingrid began experimenting with a much wider variety of audience tasks since we did not have the traditional outer and inner circles on Zoom.

For the new audience tasks, similar to classic literature circles in reading instruction, each individual in a group was assigned a different written follow-up task. These tasks rotated after each fishbowl. For example, a five-person peer discussion group each completed one of the following tasks: (1) a **content summarizer** of the discussion;(2) a **vocabulary-recorder** detailing key words that were central to the discussion; (3) a **question poser** who posts three unresolved group questions to an online class forum;(4) an **opinion writer** who explains personal responses to the text discussed; (5) a **logistical reporter** who offers insight into participation, leadership or time management in the group. Each person completed all of the different roles at least once over the course of the 10 weeks.

From our **online, any time** writing instruction, a new **hybrid learning** modality has evolved. After teaching the fishbowl in-person for many years, Briana fully shifted from **online, any time learning** to a **hybrid** course. She began our practice in her hybrid courses, where group meetings or break-out groups on Zoom mimic a classic in-person or online style of the fishbowl. Students choose convenient Zoom meeting times for their small groups, resulting in excellent participation. In the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) hybrid course design, Briana began meeting the students once a week in a campus classroom and once a week asynchronously. This modality invited an interesting challenge for the fishbowl Technique to exist between fully **in-person, real-time** learning or completely **online, any time** learning formats, opening opportunities for community-building and critical conversations about the readings in virtual settings.

One thing that is different in this hybrid version of the practice is that students receive instructor-prepared slides to independently guide their peer discussions. Leaning on their annotated, assigned reading texts, each person must speak in their own words to respond to probing questions using text evidence. However, just as in the traditional fishbowl Technique, it is still preferable not to provide the fishbowl discussion questions too far in advance, but only shortly before the students meet in order to encourage a more spontaneous discussion and to prevent students from pre-writing and reading their answers.

Silence or uneven participation were common challenges for some student-led groups, just like when an instructor is present, coincidentally. That hallmark "discomfort" of the fishbowl Technique reemerged in its online, any time learning forms. This is the beauty of being an educator—we are, in fact, innovators, continually working to solve problems. All good innovators require tools and the fishbowl Technique is an accessible teaching tool for critical engagement with texts as a basis for writing that emphasizes comprehension, vocabulary or grammar exploration, student interaction, inquiry, and community. The **hybrid** learning modality influenced our classroom community, interaction levels, and writing outcomes in new ways. This chapter will focus on **online, any time** and **hybrid** learning deliveries of the fishbowl practice.

SCHOLARSHIP, THEORIES, AND PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE OUR APPROACH

As an English for multilingual students (EMS) program at a large public university where our department offers multiple sections of the same course in live or hybrid modalities, we recognize how classic, consistent teaching techniques which are readily adaptable to all modalities serve as an anchor in the curriculum. When we re-examine our variations of the fishbowl technique, we are grounded in four characteristics of sound online writing instruction: personal, accessible, responsive and strategic (PARS), as illustrated by Jessie Borgman and Casey McArdle in pages 4-5 of their introduction to the *PARS in Practice* collection. A particular focus on the concepts of personal and strategic are detailed in two extended lesson plan charts (see Appendix).

A multilingual reader's personal experience of interacting deeply with reading texts cannot be taken for granted. The Socratic Method[1] and the framework of activity theory in L. S. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978) have both been readily applied to language learning to pinpoint how learners' motives and social mediation of meaning contribute to their learning process. In second language acquisition, Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" has been a major subject of interest to examine "how learning is formed through learning from the more experienced peers (teacher-learner or learner-learner) for more scaffolded collaborations" (Kung, 2017, p. 4). Both of these theories point a lens on the fishbowl technique, particularly for online writing instruction grounded in the concept of "scholarship as conversation" (Kung, 2017, p. 4). This principle, articulated in the Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL)

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1   If you are unfamiliar with the Socratic Method, you can learn more about it at https://tilt. colostate.edu/the-socratic-method/

Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (2016) emphasizes how information literacy emerges by genuinely engaging students in interested reader conversations much like the members of a book club would do (https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework). At the heart of writing instruction, we contend, lie discussions that are intentionally layered to tease out not only comprehension, but also grammar or vocabulary inspiration, brainstorming and genre awareness, or the dissection of rhetorical devices such as tone, style, or flow. The fishbowl technique is also aligned with the Writing Program Administrators, National Council of Teachers of English, and National Writing Project's *Framework for Success in Post-Secondary Writing* (2011) definition of Developing Critical Thinking through Writing, Reading and Research in which students:

- Read texts from multiple points of view
- Identify and draft texts for multiple purposes
- Craft discipline-specific responses and build genre awareness
- Analyze and synthesize quality of sources
- Create informed written texts for various audiences
- Generate questions to guide research

Even with these principles in mind, we struggle to consider adaptations across modalities. Can consistent and effective peer-directed reader conversations emerge in online modalities? Do such online conversations support students in the writing process? To explore these questions, we referred to the Global Society for Online Literacy Education's (GSOLE) definition of an online literacy course (OLC) which states that "OLC educators make use of core literacies to promote skill and/or knowledge development. OLCs promote critical thinking and communicative expression of that thinking; many such courses are writing-centric and may be called online writing courses (OWCs)" (*Online Literacy Instruction Principles and Tenets*, 2019). We realized the broad pedagogical potential of applying the fishbowl technique in this hybrid learning setting demonstrated our commitment to critical thinking in our online writing instruction.

COURSE CONTEXT AND LESSON

The English for Multilingual Students (EMS) program is in the linguistics department at UCSB. The EMS program includes four levels of undergraduate writing courses focused on teaching English for academic purposes with multilingual students. These required writing classes provide instruction and practice in academic reading, writing, and oral skills needed for university-level work. Three of the four levels in this program are pre-entry level writing classes in which students are placed based on the results of a written exam. These first three levels emphasize

academic writing, grammatical and lexical approaches. However, the fourth level focuses more on rhetorical strategies and genre-based writing.

The new hybrid courses have 18 international students and are offered for 10 weeks. The class meets in person for one hour and 50 minutes, once each week, with asynchronous material posted online in a module as support (live classes meet twice each week). The fishbowl technique will be introduced live in class only for the first time—to teach the format and strategies for conducting a productive discussion. After that, fishbowl discussions will be student-led and conducted online.

Incorporating the fishbowl technique aligned our classroom practice with several guiding principles of effective online writing instruction as defined in key online writing instruction guidelines and theories. By using these lesson plans, Briana streamlined preparation of a hybrid writing course. Lessons such as these resulted in a regular structure for critical thinking and writing preparation that students became increasingly more autonomous with and invested in as the quarter progressed.

In the following section, we unpack two lesson plans for the **hybrid** course. At the beginning of the course, students practiced one fishbowl during an **in-person, real-time learning** class with a traditional written follow-up task due immediately (Lesson Plan 1). This type of lesson plan only needed to be conducted once as an introduction to the process. One week later, students began their own hybrid fishbowl experiences online using an alternative format which would be repeated throughout the course (Lesson Plan 2). Two extended lesson plans, with a teaching rationale for each step of the lessons, are available in the Appendix.

Lesson Plan 1: Introduction to the Fishbowl Practice (live)

Purpose

By the end of this fishbowl lesson, you will have a better understanding of how to write a literary, narrative, non-fictional paper. You will also gather new vocabulary and grammar structures to use in your upcoming paper. In addition, you will become more familiar with the genre of memoir writing and how to conduct a seminar-style discussion.

PowerPoint Slide 1: Fishbowl Arrangement

Slide text: We will arrange desks to create an "inner circle" and "outer circle" for the discussion. Follow this diagram and rearrange your desks.

Skills

When you are in the fishbowl discussion, the specific skills you will practice include:

1. Interpersonal communication skills
2. Identifying the main idea of the text
3. Genre understanding
4. Posing and answering critical thinking questions
5. Active listening
6. Synthesizing
7. Summarizing
8. Vocabulary-building

Knowledge

The fishbowl is a method of discussion that helps you to improve reading comprehension, develop both oral and written summarizing skills, utilize critical thinking, and practice grammar and genre analysis. Students will be expected to include descriptive prose, first-person narrative, and figurative language in their papers.

Task

Preparation: For this live fishbowl discussion (slides available at https://bit.ly/FishbowlDiscussionSlides) you will read and annotate *this excerpt from Educated*[2] prior to our class meeting. Utilize active annotation strategies to formulate your own opinions and responses to the author's perspective about education. Post the following response on the online class forum:

- What are the different forms of figurative language Tara Westover uses at the beginning of her excerpt from the book *Educated*?
- Do you feel this is a powerful use of the language or was it confusing to you and why?

PowerPoint Slide 2: Fishbowl Discussion Questions

Slide text: Address these questions in your group:

- How does the author give you the sensation of being in the setting of her childhood?
- What types of figurative language does she use? Give an example.
- What might you infer about the author's father?
- Do you agree with the author's viewpoint about education being a privilege?

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2   Excerpt is available for reading or listening from WBUR at https://www.wbur.org/hereand-now/2018/12/31/educated-tara-westover

- "I do think that whatever life we have becomes normalized to us, because it is the only one we have." – Westover

What is an example of something that you have lived through that became normalized to you?

Guidelines:

1. During the discussion, be sure to honor the person who is speaking by never interrupting them.
2. You can add your own personal experiences or comments to any of the guiding questions. You do not need to respond to the guiding questions in any specific order; the questions are there to guide your discussion topics.
3. Some topics may lead you to discuss ideas in your native language. Be sure your whole group can participate in this language shift and switch back to English when the questions are specific to English vocabulary and language structure.
4. Remember, silence is golden; this is when the thinking is occurring.

Follow Up

While you are not actively participating in the discussion group, you will be assigned an audience task that asks you to summarize the key components that were addressed in the fishbowl. This will be completed while you are listening to the discussion group.

PowerPoint Slide 3: Audience Task

Slide text: Listen to the fishbowl discussion. Focus on how your partner contributes to the conversation. Answer these questions on a separate piece of paper. Hand them in today for credit.

- Paraphrase when your partner used a vocabulary term or phrase from the instructor's questions in the discussion.
- Summarize the main ideas that come from the fishbowl discussion.
- Write one opinion that you had after listening to the discussion. Did you agree or disagree with your partner's perspective?

Criteria for Success

Your success in the fishbowl practice will be assessed on four criteria:

1. Discussion preparation in the form of effective text annotations and specific questions or notes
2. Active participation in response to all questions
3. Written audience task
4. Self-assessment of your participation based on the teacher-provided checklist

Extended Lesson Plans 1 and 2

Our teaching practice is based on an established theoretical rationale, outlined above. To move our fishbowl technique from **in-person, real-time learning** instruction, through **online, any time learning** modalities, and into the new **hybrid** modality, we included two extended lesson plans and the guiding principles which underlie each teaching step.

This first extended lesson plan in Briana's **in-person, real-time** class served as essential preparation for the subsequent, student-led online discussions. It is important to note that it only happened once (live) at the beginning of the quarter, so it was a key moment of instructional scaffolding (see Appendix).

LESSON PLAN 2: HYBRID FISHBOWL (ONLINE)

Briana has set up a collaboration with the editors of the UCSB student newspaper *The Daily Nexus*. Student work is considered for print publication in the opinion section of the newspaper after this essay assignment (https://bit.ly/HybridFishbowlAssignment) has been completed. Students have the choice to submit their Mock Nexus Paper to be considered for publishing.

Purpose

This fishbowl session will take place virtually. You will meet with your group via Zoom to discuss the published work from former Linguistics 12 students in *The Daily Nexus*[3] campus newspaper (https://dailynexus.com/2021-06-29/international-students-reflect-on-a-year-of-online-education/). Your Mock Nexus Paper that you will begin drafting will use a similar genre of writing aimed at the same audience as these articles. Be sure to look at how these authors provided evidence to support their written position.

Here is a brief slide presentation for one of these student-led discussions (https://bit.ly/HybridFishbowlSlides):

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3   We use *The Daily Nexus* because it is our campus newspaper. Learn more at https://dailynexus.com/

Slide text: Follow these steps:

1. Complete reading and tasks before your meeting.
2. Arrange a group meeting date. Each person chooses one of the roles.
3. Have a synchronous discussion using Zoom, Facetime, WeChat or another live option. Spend 40-50 minutes on tasks. Take notes.
4. Go deep into ideas, language and questions that you noticed.

Skills

When you are in the fishbowl discussion, the specific discussion, reading, and writing skills you will practice include:

Discussion:

- Interpersonal communication skills
- Posing and answering critical thinking questions
- Active listening

Reading:

- Annotation strategies
- Synthesizing

Writing:

- Genre analysis
- Summarizing
- Vocabulary-building
- Analysis of evidence to support an opinion/position
- Writing for a particular audience

Knowledge

A main goal for your fishbowl session focuses on rhetorical knowledge—to analyze and write for appropriate audiences, purposes, and contexts. While the subject of your Mock Nexus paper may be different from those you are reading, the tone, choice of academic vocabulary, use of authoritative evidence, writing genre, and structure will be similar.

Tasks

Preparation: Please read and annotate the published submissions from former students in the UCSB newspaper *The Daily Nexus*. Review the specific job that you will be taking on for the group discussion in the slide below. If you are the questioner, you will need to prepare your questions prior to the group meeting.

Procedure: Your group will hold your meeting at a specific time online. Have one member record the session to submit to your teacher with all of your individual work. Be sure to take notes while you are participating in your discussion.

The focus for discussion:

- Summarize the position that each author presents in their article.
- How do the authors target this specific audience?
- What is the overall tone of each author?
- How do they use academic vocabulary in their writing?
- Is their article concisely written?
- Do the authors successfully provide evidence to support their position?
- Share your personal opinions about the different topics these authors have covered.

Slide text: 3. In the first discussion, each person chooses a role. Switch roles in the subsequent discussions.

Role 1 (Summarizer): Write a summary of what happened in your group.

Role 2 (Questioner): Post three group questions to the forum. Your questions should be specific to the tasks assigned.

Role 3 (Vocabulary profiler): Choose five key phrases or words from the article that are important. Define each one. Write an original sentence with each in the context of the article's topic.

Each student must invite the instructor to ONE group discussion for a grade this quarter. You choose when. We will have four to five group discussions.

During that observation, I will be grading your contribution and participation, not the correctness of your answers.

Schedule your date in advance by email. Do not wait until late in the quarter, otherwise there may not be enough time.

Follow up: Gather all of your materials in one GoogleDoc to share with your instructor prior to our next class session. Be sure to include the recording of your meeting.

Criteria for Success

- Your group will make one Google document to share with your instructor.
- Provide your individual roles and a link for the recording of the discussion.
- Your contributions must be written in complete sentences and paragraphs.
- The summary must contain a thesis statement and topic sentences for any supporting paragraphs.

- Check your notes and work for grammar and spelling.
- The questioner must submit to the class forum posted on the LMS.

Extended Lesson Plan 2

A second extended lesson plan chart continued to aid us in aligning established theories with the practice as Briana shifted the fishbowl technique into the hybrid learning modality (see Appendix B).

REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

Overall experience

As Briana looked back on the fishbowl lessons from her **hybrid** course, it became clear that this technique bettered her writing instruction. By using the technique in a **hybrid** course design, she got the best of both worlds. She was able to introduce and model the practice **in-person** and then scaffold the lessons online in weekly **hybrid** models. Students voted to keep their fishbowl groups consistent throughout the quarter and this allowed many of them to establish new friendships from the class. They would meet online for their weekly fishbowl practice, and some even went on to meet for dinners and gatherings. In course feedback, students used words like "fun," "collaborating," "interesting," and "friendships" when reflecting on their fishbowl experiences. Writing, and the preparation for the writing process, became a social activity for the students. By removing the instructor from being present in the discussion process, students became independent, and the social dynamic shifted in their groups. In some groups, they were able to establish a stronger connection with their peers that continued to thrive outside of the walls of the classroom. What an outcome for any teacher to have from their class!

In mid-quarter feedback, many students said that the fishbowl was one of the highlights of the course. They stated that it helped them to develop their vocabulary and speaking skills: "I felt that the fishbowl meetings really helped me to understand the readings and I could ask my friends questions," was a statement from one undergraduate student. Some also expressed that it assisted them in idea construction, outlines, crafting a position or thesis statement. They reflected on the ideas they had shared from the fishbowl discussion and said that they felt clearer in developing their writing.

Students also expressed how the fishbowl clarified certain concepts in the readings and enabled them to use authors' ideas as evidence in their own writing pieces. By following guided instructions for the process that were distributed to students in the lesson plans, they were able to run their seminar-like groups for

forty-five minutes to an hour . . . completely on their own. They talked about purpose and audience, genre, tone, vocabulary, and evidence. They each took their role within the group very seriously and most groups were successful. Of course, there was one group that had some struggles, yet the vast majority of students reported their Zoom-based fishbowl conversations were quite successful.

LABOR

For a visual overview of the instructor's preparation and labor cycle throughout the quarter, please see Figure 8.2.

For each discussion, Briana posted a five- to ten-minute lesson plan with instructions for the in-person session. More preparation time is needed in week 0 for reading selections, writing prompts and lesson plan drafting, but it evened out once Briana was comfortable with the format. Providing students with clear expectations and fishbowl practice guidelines is imperative.

Much of the labor and preparation for this activity takes place in week 0 and subsequently weeks 4, 6, and 8 when Briana had to preview and score each groups' Google Document content. A helpful suggestion to teachers using this practice is to skim through the Zoom meeting videos. By using double speed and visually skimming through the videos, you can get used to scanning students' Zoom sessions and save time in the grading process.

Fishbowl Labor Chart
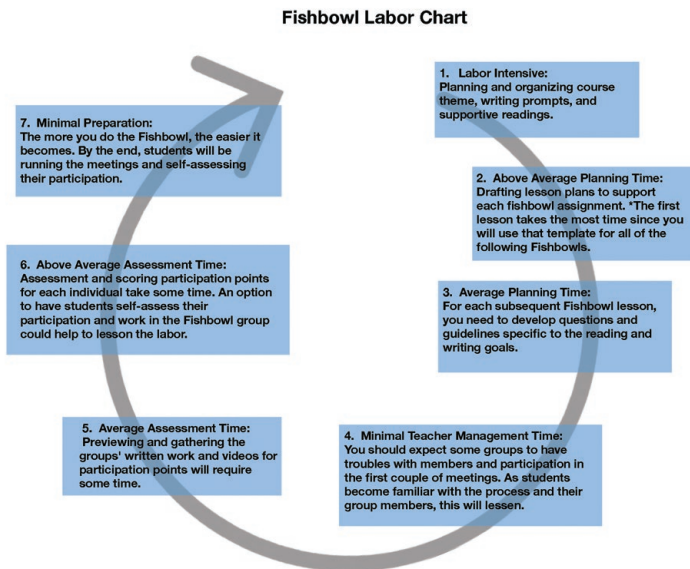
Figure 8.2. This visual overview depicts the stages of instructor preparation for an overview of the labor cycle during one 10-week quarter.

GROUP DYNAMICS

One student struggled with attendance, only meeting with her group a couple of times during the quarter. However, Briana made adaptations to their fishbowl assignments. This was also very easy to track when Briana was calculating participation points for the fishbowl meeting because students were recording their sessions and sharing links to those recordings in a Google Document. That group did experience frustration and stress due to the irregular attendance of one member, yet, this is a specific situation that cannot truly be fixed in the future. It is an unforeseen element of any group assignment. In this case, at least, Briana did lessen the load of the members of this group that were participating and she believes this helped them to feel better about the situation.

The fact that some of the group discussions turned to arguments of sorts isn't surprising, considering the nature of the readings that were assigned for this specific fishbowl. The reading content was based on current campus topics and therefore it elicited impassioned, strong debates. This was aligned to a position paper writing assignment, so students were learning the art of formulating an opinion and crafting a thesis based on this position. The Mock Nexus paper allowed students to choose a topic to research and report on for the editorial section of the UCSB newspaper. This paper produces a wide variety of topics since students have choices in their writing topics.

FURTHER REFLECTIONS

We truly believe that a hybrid section is a perfect place to use the fishbowl Technique. By introducing the process in class, Briana could address questions in person before they completed their tasks and meetings. Sharing the lesson plan and all the logistics for the practice allowed students to ask questions such as, "Who is in charge of the talking? How do we turn in all of our work? What will be graded?" These questions could be clarified before students departed to run fishbowls on their own, choosing a time that would work best to gather in Zoom and to use the accountability structures that were in place.

The other personal piece of this practice in **hybrid** courses is that we could have a follow-up debriefing discussion in person when a teacher could address any concerns. Students had some problems with recording their meetings in the first round of the fishbowl. Others asked about the question forum that was posted on our course module. In one of the follow-up debriefings during class, Briana used some of the questions that were posted on her class forum to guide a whole-class discussion. This only took 10-15 minutes of unstructured discussion time at the beginning of class and Briana could check in on their overall comprehension of

the materials they had read and discussed. At the beginning of the quarter, there were more questions and concerns about the logistics for the fishbowl; as Briana reached the end of the quarter, students were so familiar with the fishbowl they did not have any questions about the process of the work. In short, their online engagement through the fishbowl technique became a routine.

There are some things that she would do differently with the fishbowl in the future. First, the assessment for the fishbowl was tricky; she had to have students share a Google Doc to view their Zoom meetings and this overloaded her email box. Next time, it would be more productive to create a class Google file from the start where they would all post their fishbowl meetings and materials.

On that same note, assigning grades or participation points for the activity was a task. Since it was Briana's first time teaching a hybrid course, she gave the students participation points for the fishbowl. It was grouped into the participation category that is weighted 10 percent for the course. Next time, she might experiment with defining participation assessment criteria to establish A-level versus C-level participation. Ingrid has done this with criteria such as (a) Natural speaking with no direct reading from notes; (b) At least one bit of text evidence is referenced in the comments; (c) Complete sentences and some academic vocabulary from the text were used. Next time, Briana would like to increase the weight of participation to 15 percent and add a self-assessment task for each student to complete after they finish the fishbowls.

On one final note, many students shared that they felt more comfortable talking and discussing in small groups over Zoom than they did in a whole-class format. When Briana compared the discussions she had observed in week 1 compared to week 10, she could see stronger discussions and deeper reflections from these students. This supports our goal of responsive teaching. The fishbowl added an element of live peer discussion that had not been present in many of their prior online modules. The **hybrid** fishbowl helped to build a community of learners in the sections, something that is unique and oftentimes challenging to foster in **online, any time** writing instruction.

CONCLUSION

The benefits of connecting speaking and writing have been extensively documented, particularly to overcome writing barriers and reach new levels of proficiency. The fishbowl Technique offers countless options to modify discussions from the live classroom into both asynchronous and hybrid teaching modalities. Utilizing fishbowl dialogues in our online writing instruction forced our students to interact more directly online while they deciphered linguistic devices and other elements that drive the composing process.

A compelling reason to include this Socratic-style fishbowl technique is that hybrid modalities offered us wiggle room to introduce necessary student-to-student interaction with texts, mutual interpretations of evidence, and collaborative editing of their language for academic writing. The beauty of being an educator is that we are, in fact, innovators. All good innovators require tools and the fishbowl technique is a versatile teaching tool for critical engagement with texts as a basis for writing that emphasizes comprehension, vocabulary or grammar exploration, student interaction, inquiry, and community. And we were also pleasantly surprised at how effectively the fishbowl technique reinforces strong online writing instruction.

For example, our program requires extensive written feedback on students' work. In online writing instruction, student-to-student discourse can parallel and complement formal written assignments and conventional, ongoing written feedback that is offered through rubrics, margin, and end comments. In the case of limited face-to-face interaction, we as instructors can squeeze into either asynchronous or hybrid landscapes, and peer discussion groups effectively pull together several elements of the hybrid course.

One beautiful element of the fishbowl practice is that—once you get it established—it begins to run itself. Students gain confidence and control of the discussion sessions. Their writing began to be sprinkled with evidence from their fishbowl meetings. Students expressed how it became easier to build their outlines for the longer writing pieces after completing fishbowl meetings. They said that their fishbowl meetings were a great way to gather information for the writing prompts. It is also noteworthy to mention that this practice was successfully completed in a 10-week **hybrid** course; it would be even more beneficial to establish this practice in a longer semester structure.

Why would you want to try the fishbowl in your **hybrid** or **online, any time** writing course? Our answer would be, why wouldn't you? As educators, we strive to provide motivating content, dynamic lessons, and an opportunity to build community in online sections. The fishbowl technique facilitates these objectives because whether the instructor is fishing for more critical textual engagement, or students are casting their own nets, the aim of online engagement is being met. It empowers the students as they run their discussion groups and facilitate their online engagement, so their confidence grows. The instructor scaffolds student learning outcomes that drive the lesson, but the actual learning is led by the students themselves.

MOVING BETTER PRACTICES ACROSS MODALITIES

- **In-Person, Real-Time Learning:** Traditional fishbowl discussions are conducted in class with Instructor participation. Each group may incorporate some students via "hyflex" video call.

- **Online, Real-Time Learning:** Simultaneous fishbowl discussions conducted through breakout rooms with a general debriefing session at the end.
- **Online, Any Time Learning:** Assigned peer discussion groups meet at scheduled times outside of class. A prescribed discussion process is established. Each student submits a reflective discussion report afterwards.
- **Hybrid Learning:** Fishbowl technique is practiced once in the live meeting. Then, assigned peer discussion groups meet at scheduled times outside of class. Class debriefings about the process occur in the following live meeting.

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APPENDIX A: EXTENDED LESSON PLAN 1

Step 1: Preparation

Read the assigned text. Apply active annotation strategies in the margins.

Teaching Rationale: Socratic-style questioning in the fishbowl technique challenges students to identify and explore "threshold concepts" in source readings in order to feel equipped to complete their writing assignments. Information literacy is one building block for our academic writing curriculum, as outlined in the ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (2016), so we also teach or review effective annotation techniques.

Step 2: Reflection

Post a response to the reading question in the online class forum.

Teaching Rationale: Reflective tasks, encouraging students to bring their own questions to a fishbowl discussion, acknowledge "information creation as a process" and encourage "research as inquiry" (ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (2016)). These two principles are central to our technique.

Requiring short written response assignments elicits a connection between the assigned academic reading texts and future writing tasks. The online forum response serves as a simple jumping-off point with which students begin a reflection online, briefly read or interact with peer responses in the online discussion, and then move into the remotely-conducted fishbowl discussions.

Step 3: Slides 1 and 2:

In small groups, conduct your first 15-minute fishbowl discussion using your text annotations and the questions posted on the slides.

Slide 3: Students sitting in the outer circle must complete an audience- listening task while witnessing the fishbowl discussion.

Then all of the inner circle swaps places with students in the outer circle.

Teaching Rationale: In the hybrid modality, this is the only chance for students

to conduct a fishbowl discussion live since future discussions will all be held on Zoom (or other platforms). Staging one fishbowl discussion in the classroom is a chance to establish a safe group dynamic, but this step can also be done very effectively online, if necessary.

The basic live structure of the fishbowl creates speakers (like goldfish in a bowl) and observers (just watching and listening) who then swap roles. The observers then build on the discussion that they just witnessed when they move into the fishbowl.

The instructor provides guiding questions or topics for the discussion groups to address in their speaking sessions. English language learner research shows that scaffolded lesson plans are an important component of writing preparation. So, we aim to balance students' need for structure with enough flexibility for groups to engage in their own process of inquiry. For example, slide 2 shows five questions about: rhetorical devices, vocabulary, comprehension, reader response, and application of ideas. Other possible guiding points might be genre-based comparisons, topic-specific vocabulary use, parts of speech or grammar concepts to note from the reading.

The observers are given a set of "audience tasks" to complete during their listening session. How to effectively write a summary of the discussion is a common written audience task assignment since summaries are an important genre of academic writing. However, the tasks should be varied, so they might include comparisons, opinions, or vocabulary development, too.

Both students' annotations and the quality of the suggested teacher questions determine the effectiveness of each fishbowl discussion. Probing with the right questions at the appropriate time is an art in which the questioner intentionally strives to vary the "moves" used throughout the discussion. According to Paul & Elder, some of the sample spontaneous Socratic questioning "moves" that instructors should typically use include:

- Ask for an example of a point a student has made or of a point you have made.
- Ask for evidence or reasons for a position.
- Propose a counter-example or two.
- Ask the group whether they agree. (e.g., Does everyone agree with this point? Is there anyone who does not agree?)
- Suggest parallel or similar examples.
- Provide an analogy that illuminates a particular position.
- Paraphrase an opposing view.
- Rephrase student responses clearly and accurately.

Paul and Elder's (2006) "moves" support academic essay writing preparation

because they can target elements of the prompt which students are expected to write about, such as supporting evidence (point 2 above), formulate similar or hypothetical examples based on their own understanding (point 4 above), paraphrase (point 7), or rephrase (point 8) authors' ideas (Paul & Elder, 2006, p. 34). However, the crucial difference between instructor-led fishbowl discussions, as envisioned by Paul and Elder, and our hybrid fishbowl technique is the online learning component through which students develop ownership over these moves. The hybrid modality promotes a practice of relationship-rich education through this loose learning community in which academic interactions between peers not only build confidence of expression yet supply the writers with concrete ideas and language as they create meaning together.

In the subsequent hybrid discussions, we rely on students to continue with the (often uncomfortable) process of inquiry with increasingly less instructor guidance. For example, future discussions may or may not have specific instructor questions to guide the discussion. Sometimes a focus on vocabulary, themes, grammar structures, or other areas are chosen in student-designed discussions as they become more proficient in mining every text.

Step 4: Review Discussion Guidelines

Listen carefully to each speaker- don't interrupt.

Address the guiding questions in any order.

Add relevant personal experiences or comments to any of the guiding questions.

If topics lead to discussion in your native language, ensure that the entire group can participate. Then switch back into English.

Thinking pauses are normal. Silence is golden, so embrace it.

Teaching Rationale: This review of the guidelines is intended to establish a ritual or fishbowl format that students can lean on once they are facilitating hybrid discussions on their own.

Using the Socratic Method, a curious instructor does not impart information directly to the students, yet models and guides each discussion into deeper understandings through a series of spontaneous, exploratory, or critical questions, along with intense listening and written follow-up tasks. As Paul & Elder explained, "The key to success here is entering or adopting the Socratic spirit; this occurs when one becomes genuinely curious, truly wondering what students are and are not thinking. . . The Socratic spirit wants them to become concerned with intellectual standards, with whether or not what they think is true or false, logical or illogical, reasonable or unreasonable" (Paul & Elder, 2008, p. 34).

To assist in adopting this Socratic spirit, Paul and Elder developed a helpful checklist of discussion "moves" ("The Art of Socratic Questioning Checklist") to

guide the direction a discussion takes. For example, if a language barrier arises, an instructor asks, "What is the main idea you are putting forth? Could you explain it differently?" (Paul & Elder, 2006, pp. 4-5).

APPENDIX B: EXTENDED LESSON PLAN 2

Ingrid's Hybrid Extended Lesson Plan

Lesson plan 2 details a student-led hybrid fishbowl discussion once the students have been introduced to the process, and is aligned with the GSOLE principle #3.4 that "Instructors and tutors should migrate and/or adapt appropriate reading, alphabetic writing, and multimodal composition theories from traditional instructional settings to their OLI environment(s)" (Global Society of Online Literacy Educators OLI Principle 3.4).

Step 1: Slides 4 & 5

Deepening the discussion practice

Teaching Rationale: The hybrid discussion format is outlined and explained to students. As fishbowl sessions take place virtually, the guided process of read + annotate + reflect + discuss + write + edit continues in the instructor's effort to address the complex dynamics of course design and instruction by offering students a personal and strategic approach (Borgman and McArdle, 2020) to composing.

The objectives of this lesson include posing and answering critical questions, active listening, summarizing, vocabulary building, and more. Continuing the discussions online frees up the limited number of classroom meetings we had for other writing preparation. This is also aligned with GSOLE Principle 3.4 (see above).

Our multilingual students regularly express frustration if group work is inadequately structured or guided, such as during some peer review or self-assessment tasks. Yet, student-generated questions preparing for written tasks do, at times, run the risk of merely including lower-order questions according to Bloom's Taxonomy—knowledge, comprehension, and application. Therefore, it is crucial to balance the need for structure and spontaneity while ensuring that higher-order questions, such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, are also prompted. As confidence in the fishbowl Technique and their peer group grows, students reflect on the autonomy to listen to and respect each other's diversity of ideas and benefit from some time to polish their written follow-up tasks. This lays the foundation for a community of writers—a personal approach to writing (Borgman and McArdle, 2020).

Step 2: Bridge to writing instruction

Step 3: Specific audience follow-up written task options

Teaching Rationale: Our varied written follow-up assignments are one bridge to written work. Students rotate and complete a different role after each discussion. The role titles might be: a) Summarizer; b) Vocabulary Profiler; c) Logistical report; d) Questioner.

Mentor texts: Analysis of student-written essays and mentor texts (i.e., Starting Lines, Nexus articles) encourages a level of discussion that is one step closer to the students' final written assignments. because using these models allows students to compare work timed writing tasks, peer response tasks, or simple revision of their drafts. According to the WPA, NCTE, and NWP *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* (2011), this establishes "rhetorical and twenty-first-century skills as well as habits of mind and experiences that are critical for college success." More specifically, these skills and habits are:

- Rhetorical knowledge: the ability to analyze and act on understandings of audiences, purposes, and contexts in creating and comprehending texts;
- Critical thinking: the ability to analyze a situation or text and make thoughtful decisions based on that analysis, through writing, reading, and research;
- Writing processes: multiple strategies to approach and undertake writing and research;
- Knowledge of conventions: the formal and informal guidelines that define what is considered to be correct and appropriate, or incorrect and inappropriate, in a piece of writing;
- Abilities to compose in multiple environments: from using traditional pen and paper to electronic technologies.

APPENDIX C: ONE SAMPLE FISHBOWL SUMMARIES WRITTEN BY STUDENTS

Graduate Class Student Zhencheng Wang (Ling 3G) Winter 2021(asynchronous); three-person group.
Discussion Summary 1

Dorde Nikolic, Xin Jiang and me (Zhencheng Wang) had a discussion on Zoom from 8:15 to 9:20 p.m. on Tuesday (Jan 12). During the discussion, we went through Tasks 1–7 in Unit 2 in AWGS together. We took turns to read our own responses to other group members, who gave comments or asked questions afterwards. Overall, this discussion proceeded smoothly, with some small disagreements among us that Xin posted as questions.

During the discussion, there are several points that we found useful or important. First and foremost, by reading the texts and finishing the tasks, we had some concrete feelings on how to write a General-Specific passage. Useful openings include general statements, statistics and definitions. Secondly, audience is important. For example, for Task 1 on Page 56, three of us found the text hard to read and understand, especially for part A. One possible reason is that this text might be aimed for people who have some knowledge in TV programs. Another example is that, in Task 4 on Page 64, Xin showed a deeper understanding than Dorde and me since she majors in (economics. Additionally, we agreed on the point that the flow of information is important, for example the Task 1 and 4 mentioned above. Repeating some key words is useful for this flow.

Several fun things that we learned from each other include: 1) Language usage is different among disciplines. For instance, when we talked about using statistics as openings, I pointed out that in physics this is seldomly used. 2) We do have some similarities. In Task 7 on Page 70, we shared our screens to show the definitions in the journal papers. We found that we have similar ways to define notions, although the definitions seem to appear in different parts of an article. 3) Dorde and Xin are excellent partners to work with. We had a great discussion.

APPENDIX D: INGRID'S FISHBOWL INTRODUCTION

Sample video clip of Ingrid's brief, informal, course introduction of peer discussion groups (aka fishbowl discussion) in an asynchronous course (https://bit.ly/FishbowlIntroduction). Note: AWGS stands for our textbook, Academic Writing for Graduate Students by John M. Swales & Cristine B. Feak.

APPENDIX E: THREE STUDENT ESSAYS PUBLISHED IN UCSB CAMPUS NEWSPAPER, THE DAILY NEXUS, AS A RESULT OF BRIANA'S CLASS:

1. International Students Reflect on Remote Learning, Nexus, June 2021. https://dailynexus.com/2021-06-29/international-students-reflect-on-a-year-of-online-education/
2. International Students Speak Out, Nexus, February 2020. https://dailynexus.com/2020-02-20/students-speak-out-on-coronavirus/
3. International Students on the Transition to Remote Learning, Nexus, June 2020. https://dailynexus.com/2020-06-30/international-students-on-the-transition-to-remote-learning/