

### 3D: Fishbowl Discussions

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD, Professor, Department of Psychology, Butler University** [00:00:00] At the beginning of the semester, I start to set the stage for this particular discussion format that we are going to use.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:00:11] The discussion that we will do in this class is probably a little bit different than what you've done in other classes. I call it a fishbowl discussion.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:00:17] When I am doing the fishbowl discussion, one of my goals is to empower those students to really be in charge of the discussion themselves.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:00:24] I will draw four of your names out of my fishbowl and the four of you will sit for 20 minutes and talk about the articles. While you are discussing, the rest of us will be sitting around listening. All right. So this is how you're kind of in a fishbowl.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:00:38] Because there's only four of them sitting there and there's 20 minutes to talk, everybody has an opportunity to say something.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:00:47] All of you have the articles that you need to read to prepare for that discussion. So here's what you need to do. You need to read the articles carefully. The next step is to prepare a paper. You're going to bring that paper with you and that's going to help you as we do the fishbowl discussion.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:01:02] When I am asking students to prepare questions for the fishbowl, I'm really asking them to link together everything that they have read.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:01:09] Part of the point of the fishbowl discussion is to tie the articles to what we learned from the textbook chapter that we just covered.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:01:16] It's one level of thinking to be able to read an article and ask questions about it, but it's another to be able to see the big picture and how it all fits together.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:01:24] You're going to pose a question that's going to start a good discussion. You will have at least three to four questions for each article separately.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:01:32] To generate good and effective discussions, you need to let the students know what your expectations are. So I make sure they know, here's what I'm looking for with the questions that you bring. I am not looking for the kinds of questions that are very nitpicky and detailed about the article. If they are asking closed-ended questions that you can answer with a yes or no answer, then that's not going to generate discussion.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:01:54] So the point is to pose questions and then the other people in the discussion answer those questions. So this is as much about listening as it is being able to present your own ideas.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:02:04] It also allows them to plan ahead for how they're going to engage their classmates in the discussion. So it's not just about them, but it's about how can I involve the other people in the discussion as well?

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:02:15] I will not be in any way a part of this conversation. So it will just be you talking to each other. I have found that students feel much freer to express their ideas to each other without me commenting on or contributing to or clarifying, kind of, their comments.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:02:32] I believe that the learning happens in them working through the material, not in me directing them. And so if they have planned and prepared appropriately, then they are ready to lead the discussion when they arrive in class.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:02:45] Well, now we get to learn who gets to be in the first fishbowl discussion.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:02:49] When they show up for the fishbowl, I have the classroom set up in a completely different way, so they're immediately reminded that they're there to do something different on that day.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:02:58] Remember that everybody's getting graded on their performance today in the fishbowl, so make sure everybody gets an opportunity to speak. Let's see who gets to start. Ali.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:03:11] The random selection of people to be in the fishbowl is a key aspect of the fishbowl because everybody has to be prepared to answer any question.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:03:20] Dan.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:03:22] All right, so you have 20 minutes to discuss the articles. Begin when you are ready.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:03:28] The most important thing about positioning the students for the fishbowl is that you have a small group in the middle that are sitting and looking at each other. So this format works best when it's a close-knit conversation amongst four students.

**Student** [00:03:43] So I thought all of these articles were really interesting . . .

**Student** [00:03:45] Because there's a debate we've learned about whether faces are special or not. So that kind of makes me wonder whether faces are different if there's a disorder that specifically makes you not be able to identify faces.

**Student** [00:03:57] It could be something about the organization of facial features.

**Student** [00:04:01] So it could be autosomal dominant and that would be reflected in the fact that so many of the family members have it.

**Megan, Student, Butler University** [00:04:07] It definitely motivates me to do the reading just because, I mean, if you're not prepared, it definitely shows.

**Dan, Student, Butler University** [00:04:12] I couldn't imagine walking into class for one of these discussions and having not done the reading. You just wouldn't know what to say and kind of sit there in silence, and that can just be painful.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:04:22] If there comes a point in the conversation where nobody is saying anything, they can sit there and look at each other for 20 minutes. And that's often when those quieter students will chime in. A lot of the more active students have made their points and have slowed down a little bit, and then those quieter students can jump in and make their points.

**Student** [00:04:39] Everyone in the family had it, but it was somewhat of a spectrum where some people were really, had severe prosopagnosia, where they couldn't recognize themselves in the mirror, whereas some had trouble if someone got a haircut. That is a really big difference.

**Dan, Student** [00:04:54] I think one of the most beneficial parts to having these group discussions and not having the teacher be involved is that you really get to build a sense of community within the class, which just makes it more fun. You're getting to work with other people your age, your peers, and are kind of growing and developing together as opposed to just having someone spit information at you.

**Student** [00:05:17] But those are different parts of the brain too, you bring in the amygdala and the insula and things like that, basal ganglia for anger . . .

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:05:24] Okay, I'm going to stop you guys there. That was a great first fishbowl. So we're going to take a few minutes here to kind of wrap up and think about what we heard in the fishbowl. Megan, would you like to comment on some of your thoughts about these articles?

**Megan, Student** [00:05:36] We have these experimenters using celebrity faces to see if they can recognize well-known people. I wondered if you change that, maybe that would be different.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:05:43] What do people think about that? Adriana.

**Adriana, Student** [00:05:50] I think they actually mentioned that they made sure that most of the celebrities were well known by some of the questions they asked.

**Tara Lineweaver, PhD** [00:05:57] I see my students grow tremendously from the beginning of the semester to the end of the semester through this fishbowl format. One of the things I want my students to take away from this class is to be able to listen to each other effectively and communicate effectively, which is what most of them are going to end up doing in graduate school or in their jobs in the future.