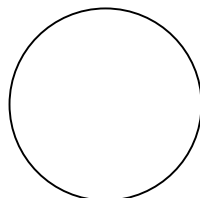


Socratic Seminar Formations

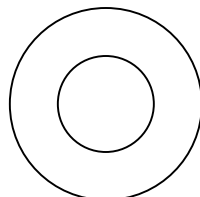
There are three basic formations for seminars. When circles are not possible, ovals, squares and other arrangements will still work. Facilitators should avoid sitting anywhere that can be perceived as the front or head of the formation. Consider sitting outside of the circle(s) as an observer only.

Single Circle



Comments: Limited to 18-22 students; arguably best at 12-16. Participants should all be able to see each other. Prepare the students for the dialogue beforehand, for example, by creating procedures for taking turns. The seminar itself begins with an opening question usually asked by the facilitator. Make sure to leave time at the end for reflection in order to improve.

Concentric Circles



Comments: The inner circle is for conversing; the outer circle for observing. Sometimes known as the fishbowl. The outer circle's job is to provide feedback to improve the quality of the dialogue. *Hot Seats* are sometimes used so that students can move between the circles. The outer circle participants need specific tasks in order to stay focused. Less talk time, but more observation time. Can handle very large groups.

Two (or more) Circles



Comments: Requires additional facilitators. If the expectations are clear enough, students can facilitate the other circle(s). Sometimes a great way to separate groups, so that both can be productive—for example, boys in one circle, girls in the other.