Concentric Circles Discussion Format

Concentric Circles is a structured discussion format that gives each student an opportunity to share their ideas, thoughts and experiences with other students. It can be used to help students get to know one another and to engage them in discussion on a selected topic.

Preparation

- Write 10 to 20 questions you'll pose to students.

Activity Directions

1. Divide students into two groups.
2. Direct students in the first group to stand in a small circle, facing out.
3. Direct students in the second group to form an outer circle around the first group, with each student facing one of the students in the inner circle. The students who are facing one another are partners.
4. Have partners introduce themselves or greet one another.
    - If the partners don't know one another, have them introduce themselves to their partner.
    - If the partners already know one another, have them greet each other with a handshake or high five.
5. Explain that you'll ask a question, and each partner will take a turn answering the question while the other person listens.
6. After a minute or two, direct students in the inner circle to take one step to the left, thereby placing themselves in front of a new partner.
7. Have the new partners introduce themselves to one another or greet one another.
8. Pose the next question.
9. Repeat until all questions have been asked.

Tips

- Structure questions so that they build upon one another. For example:
    - Tell about your favorite activity.
    - Tell about your first friend.
    - Describe your earliest positive memory.
- Shorten the amount of time for giving answers if the students are younger.
- With smaller groups, continue until everyone has had a chance to interact. With larger groups, offer 10 to 20 questions.
- If there's an odd number of participants, either join a circle yourself or have one pair of students in the inner circle move together.
- After students know the activity format, invite a student to create and give the questions.

YOU FOR YOUTH

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