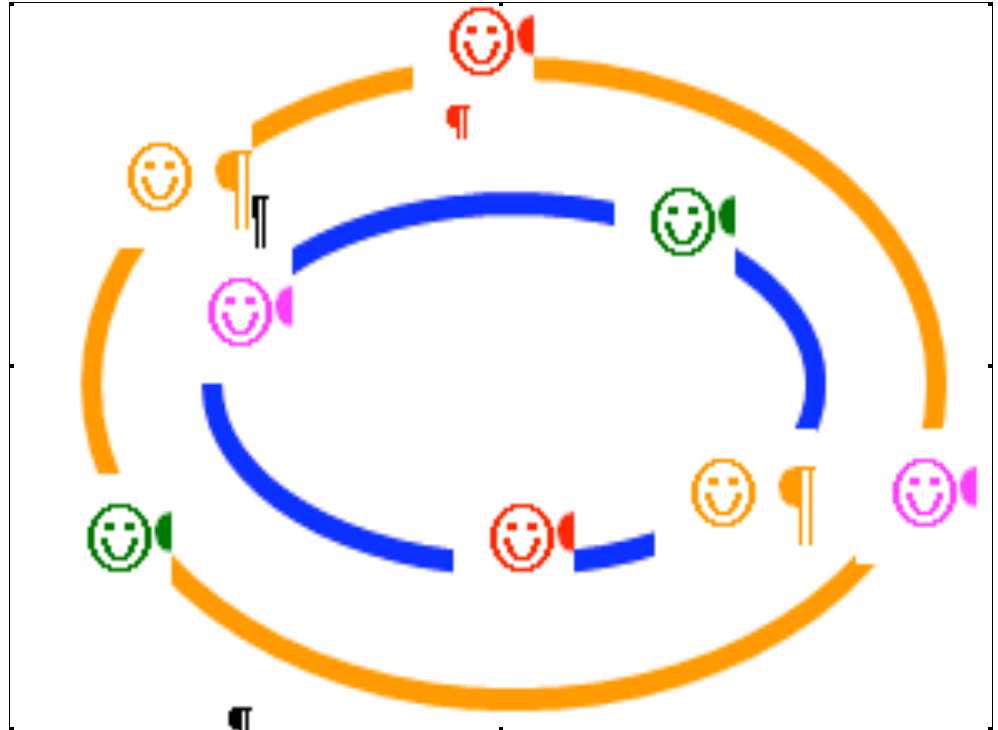


Inner-Outer Circle



This is a speaking activity that works well for open discussions or literature circles. It allows students to speak in a smaller group rather than in whole-class discussion, and students receive feedback from their peers about their participation in the group, while the teacher can observe the group as a whole.

Procedure:

1. Split the class in half. Each student will need a partner; depending on your context, it may be easier to ask students to find a partner, than to assign pairs and put one member of each pair in each group.
2. Create two concentric circles of chairs (an inner and outer circle). For elementary students, it may be practical to sit on the floor, rather than assembling chairs.
3. To begin, members of group one will sit in the inner circle chairs. Their partners (who are in group 2) will sit in a chair in the outer circle. Students should sit in a chair opposite their partner from which they are able to see and hear their partner! In the illustration the green faces are partners as are the blue and so on.
4. Give peer evaluation guides to members of the outer circle. (Before doing this activity for the first time, it would be helpful to go over guidelines for peer evaluation).

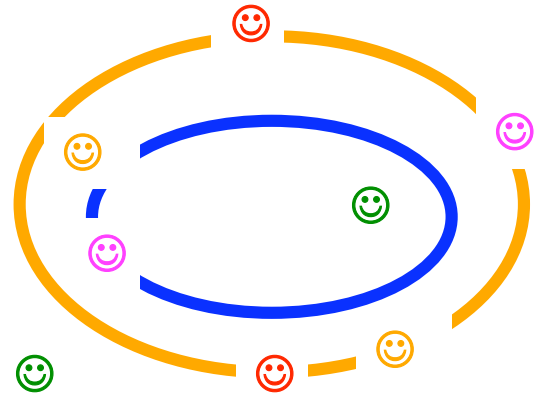
5. Students in the inner circle are assigned a topic for discussion. This could involve one broad topic or a series of questions, as in a literature circle.
6. Discussion on the topic takes place among inner circle students for a set amount of time. Outer circle students are observers, taking note of how well their partner participates in the discussion. Criteria for evaluation are up to the teacher; some possibilities include: use of selected grammar structures, contribution to the discussion, citing relevant material, encouragement of others' participation, demonstration of respect for others, etc.
7. When time is up, partners meet briefly to debrief the discussion. Inner circle participant receives constructive feedback from his/her partner in the outer circle.
8. Roles are switched. The outer circle students move into the center. It is helpful if they have a related topic or different discussion questions for their discussion. Repeat steps 4-7 with the second group in the center.

Tips:

1. Discuss evaluation criteria in advance. If the observer is looking for use of specific grammar structures or examples of content knowledge, make sure the students know this before the discussion begins.
2. Debriefing as a class helps students generate ideas about qualities of a good class discussion.
3. Time allowed for discussions should be equal for each group and depends on the level of the students. Discussion questions should be of similar difficulty.

Inner-Outer Circle Peer Assessment

Helping each other's speaking skills



My name: _____

My partner's name: _____

1. My partner contributed to the discussion	With many good ideas and examples	With some good ideas and some examples	Only by listening to others
2. My partner was respectful of others and encouraged them to speak	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
3. My partner spoke in the target language	The whole time	Most of the time	Half of the time or less

In the space below, take notes that will help you give feedback to your partner:

Good contributions:

Communication skills:

Questions you have for your partner: