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Transformation of European Food Systems Towards Sustainability by  
Transnational, Innovative Teaching



# Fishbowl in Teaching

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**CAPACITY BUILDING COURSE OF TEFSI PROJECT**

# Fishbowl Method

## What and Why?

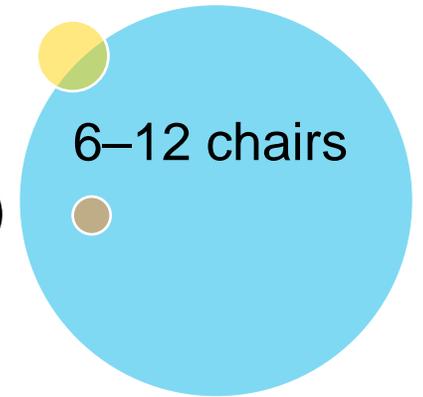
- ❑ It's a different way of doing a discussion with a group of people, richer, allows for group dynamics
- ❑ Its suitable for many topics, especially those accommodating many perspectives and opinions
- ❑ Hence, its eminently suitable for aspects of sustainable food systems
- ❑ Can be very useful as a pre-assignment activity



# Fishbowl Method

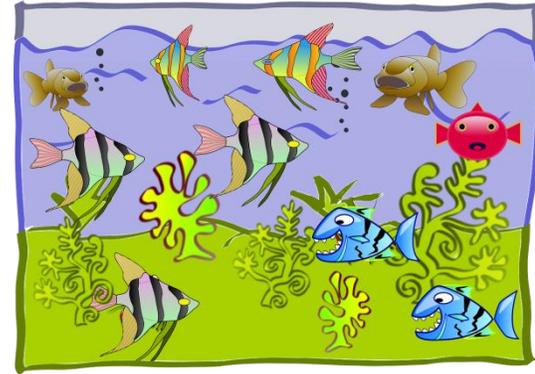
## How, Who and Where?

- Set up a circle of chairs in a room (the fishbowl) and enough room outside of the circle for the observers (they „look into the fishbowl“)
- Part of the group enter the fishbowl (the “fish”) and only they actively discuss the topic with each other
- The other part of the group (the “observers”) actively listen
- Debrief after the discussion



# Fishbowl Method

## Guidelines and Rules



- ❑ Prepare ideas and questions in advance (students)
- ❑ Structure by „switching“: All „fish“ leave the fishbowl and become „observers“ and vice versa [closed fishbowl]
- ❑ Structure by „tapping“: „observers“ can enter the fishbowl at any time by tapping a „fish“ on the shoulder to take his/her place [open fishbowl]
- ❑ Structure by „tapping“: Additionally, you can start with 1-2 empty chairs
- ❑ Structure by „feeding“: the „observers“ can ask also questions but only the „fish“ can answer and discuss



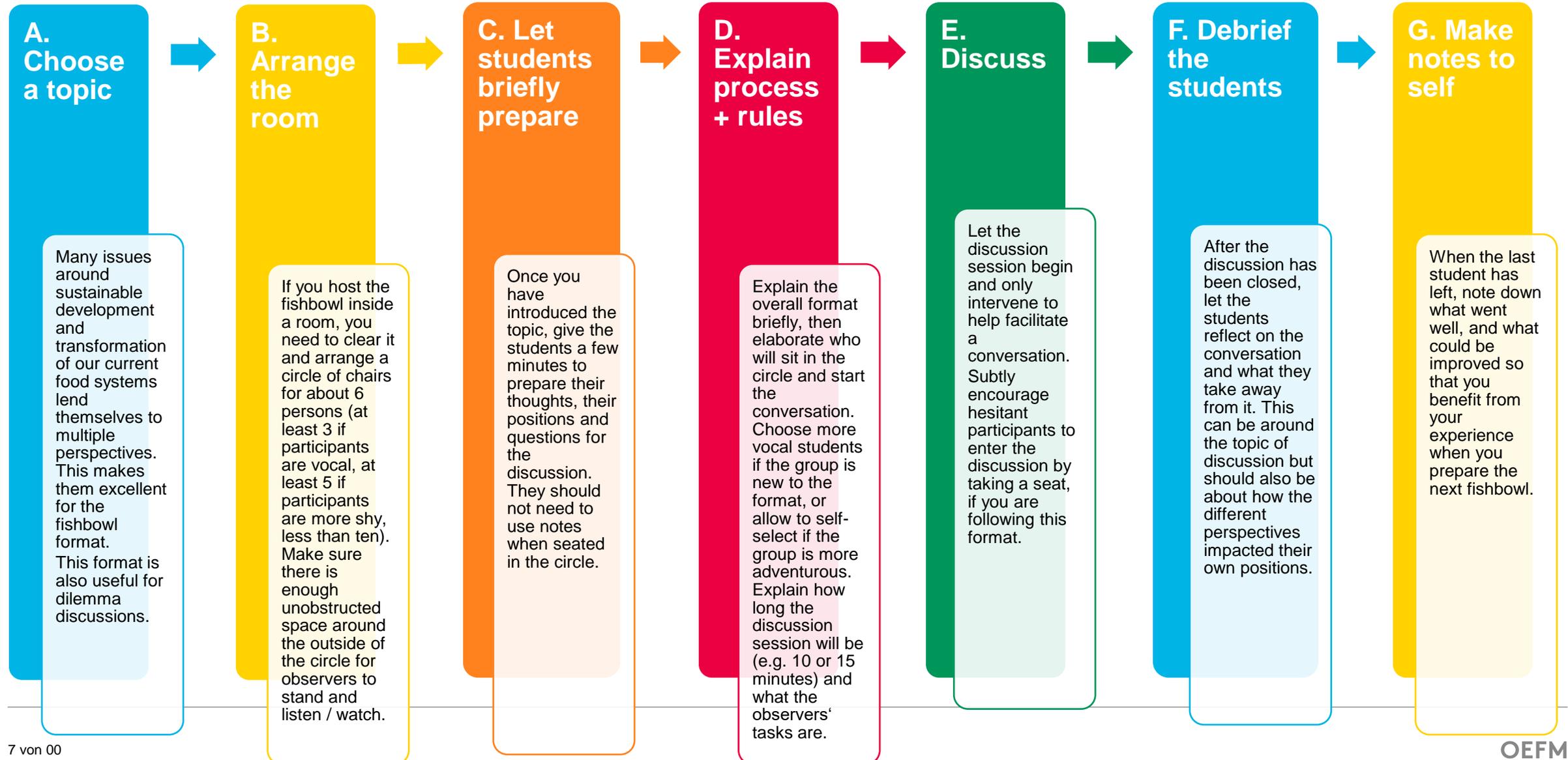
# How to use the Fishbowl Method in tertiary education



# Fishbowl To Do

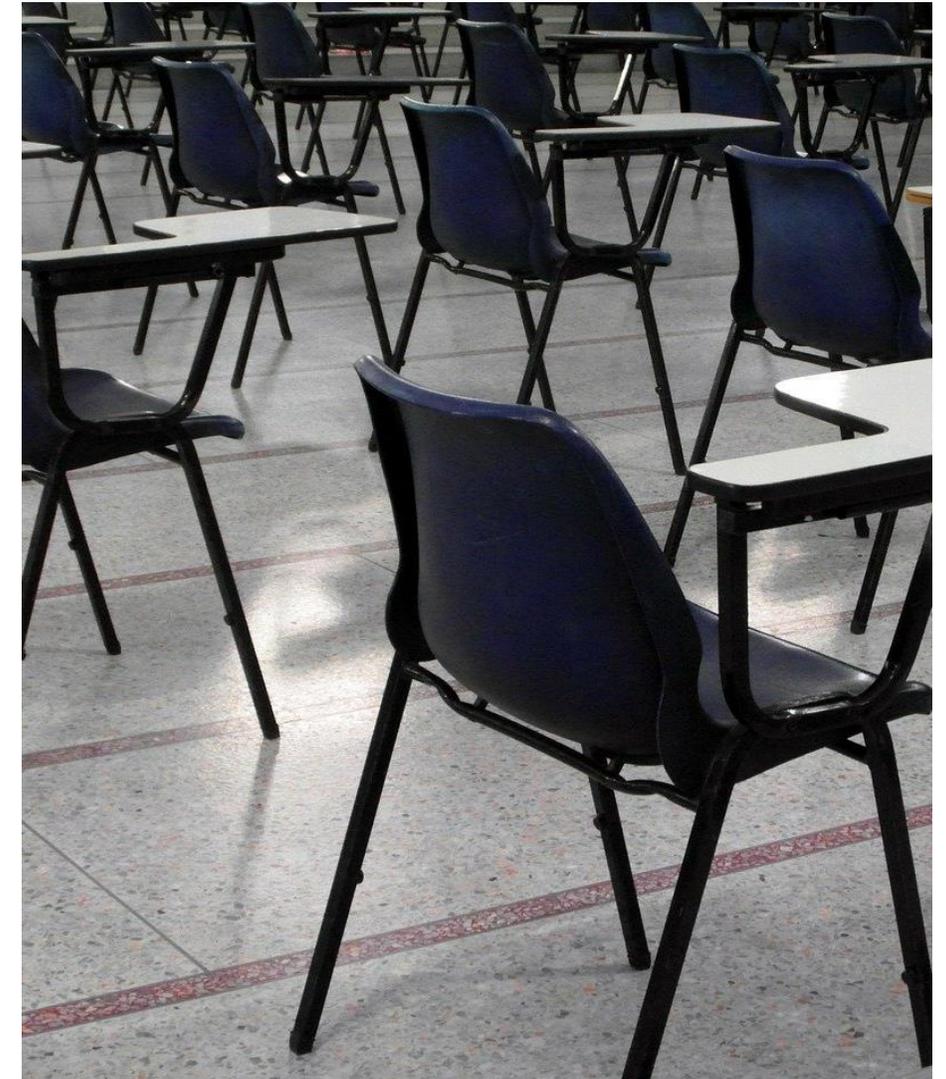
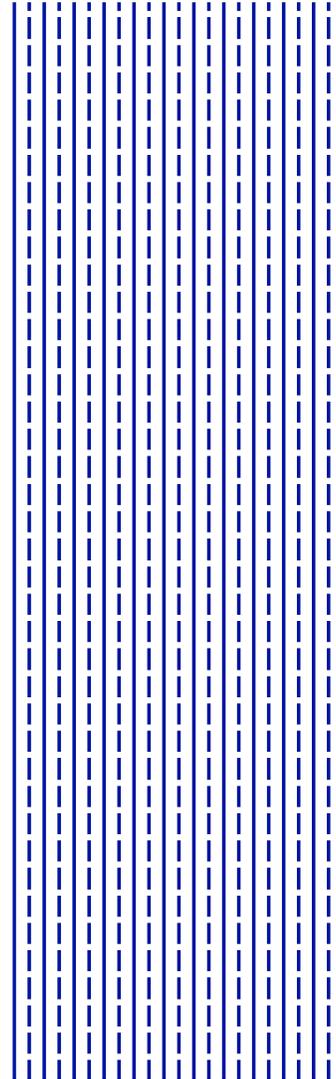
- A. Choose a topic.**
- B. Arrange the room.**
- C. Let students briefly prepare.**
- D. Explain process and rules.**
- E. Discuss.**
- F. Debrief the students.**
- G. Make notes to self.**

# Fishbowl discussion format in practice



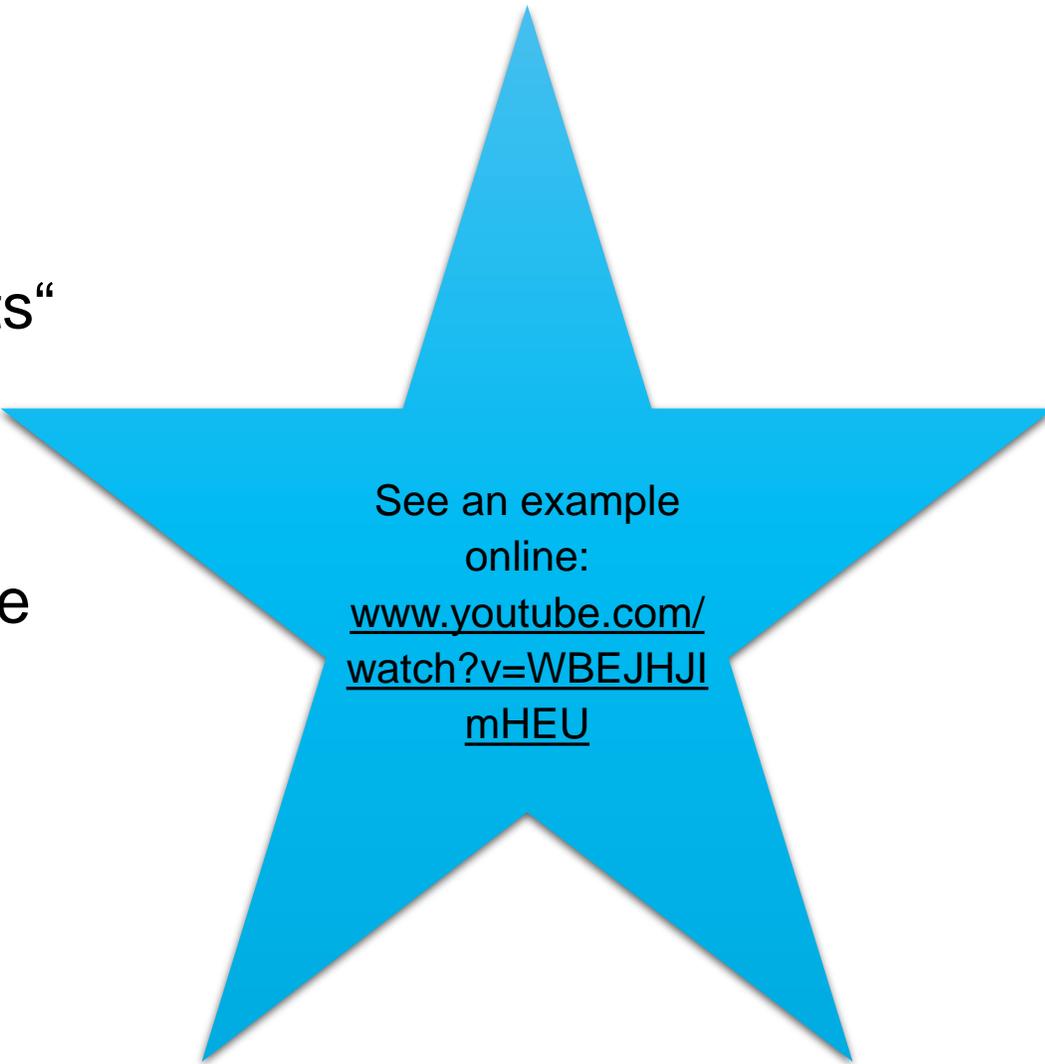


In times of  
Covid?



# Virtual fishbowl is possible!

- Ask participants to „hide non-video participants“
- 3-5 conversation starters keep their video on
- When additional conversants join, others leave
- Keep contributions short
- If so desired, enable comments



See an example  
online:  
[www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=WBEJHJI  
mHEU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBEJHJImHEU)



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# Thank you!

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# Resource and Reference List

Resources when using the Fishbowl Method:

- RMIT University in Australia has a Learning Design Pattern Collection which includes “Fishbowl” and is available here: <https://emedia.rmit.edu.au/learningpatterns/content/discussion-structure-fishbowl>
- The entry is part of a comprehensive library of methods about learning – visit it and look around for many more approaches: <https://emedia.rmit.edu.au/learningpatterns/content/design-patterns>
- Wageningen University in the Netherlands describes this tool and offers an own and a UNHR version downloads here: <http://www.mspguide.org/tool/fish-bowl> - you can find more methods at this site too
- Another easy explanation can be found on this teachers’ site: Fishbowl Discussions: from Setting up the ,Basic Bowl‘ to creating a ,Fancy Aquarium‘ <https://rpscriculumandinstruction.weebly.com/tools-tips--tricks/fishbowls>