

# Reflection on Business Communication in a “Fishbowl”: Increasing Active Learning and Course Effectiveness While Lowering Disconnection

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*Active learning is synonymous with learning by doing. Power in learning by doing has been amplified by a Confucian scholar “What I hear, I forget. What I see, I remember. What I do, I understand” (Xunzi, 340-245 BC). In the business communication class, hearing is less effective than seeing and is less effective than experience. True learning must be active, where students’ experiences produce action and connection to the real-world workplace. This pilot study explores the “Fishbowl” active learning method to teach business communication. This case study is anchored in reflective practice and the theory of learning by doing. Data were collected from instructor reflections and students’ self-report data from class discussions during the spring 2022 semester. Findings indicate that (1) practical class discussions amplify the voices of the students rather than the teacher (2) students are willing to be actively engaged with the content if allowed, (3) asking open-ended, analytical, or opinion questions increase class participation, and (4) effective teaching and learning occurs when instructors engage in reflective practice.*

*Keywords: fishbowl, reflective practice, active learning, course effectiveness, action research*

## INTRODUCTION

After many decades of educational reforms, active learning continues to be the focus of many educators. With the plethora of technological advances, educators must revamp how they teach students, access information, and facilitate active learning (Hagger, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic taught educators resilience and provided an ideal environment for higher education faculty to reflect on their teaching and find better options to promote student learning. Active learning is a well-researched and applied concept in the college classroom (Brame, 2016; Prince, 2004; Theobald et al., 2020; Yoo & Kweon, 2019). Active learning strategies have been applied across various curriculums with varying levels of success (Theobald et al., 2016). However, active learning has primarily focused on how students utilize the various active learning strategies to improve the retention and application of knowledge, skills, and principles. This research focuses on active learning from the reflective practice standpoint of educators implementing the active learning strategy. In this manuscript, *first*, active learning and “Fishbowl” will be defined. *Second*, the purpose and rationale of the paper are presented. *Third*, the paper will contextualize the situation where active learning has been applied using the “Fishbowl” strategy. After that, the research design, data collection procedures, analysis of findings, and conclusions are provided.

## Definition of Operative Terms

A composite definition of active learning encompasses students' activities to construct knowledge and understanding. Thus, active learning requires students to engage in meaningful learning activities and think about their actions. This involves metacognition—students' thinking about their learning, not explicitly seen, but is an essential element, providing the link between the required activity and student learning. The primary core elements of active learning are student activity and engagement in the learning process (Prince, 2004; Freeman et al., 2014; Brame, 2015).

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (n.d., p.1), the **“Fishbowl” active** learning strategy is a method for “...organizing medium- to large-group discussions. Students are separated into an inner and outer circle. In the inner circle, or “Fishbowl,” students have a discussion; students in the outer circle listen to the discussion and take notes.”

Schutz (2007) defines reflection or reflective practice as “...a process of reviewing an experience of practice [to] describe, analyze, evaluate, and so inform learning about practice...” (p. 1). These definitions provide context and operationalize the use of these terms throughout the paper.

## Purpose

This pilot study explored using the “Fishbowl” active learning method with business communication students. Additionally, the research is purposed to use reflective practice to evaluate and explore the impact of active learning strategies, such as “Fishbowl,” on teaching and learning efficacy. Business communication is the heart of what our students are expected to do when they enter the workforce. Therefore, they need to learn to communicate verbally and in writing effectively. Hence, this active learning strategy is relevant to their needs as future business leaders. Sometimes they will be in the “Fishbowl,” and others will be outside the “Fishbowl.” Hence this research project aims to provide suggestions to business education instructors on preparing students for active learning by engaging intrapersonally in reflective practice as they implement active learning methodologies. Finally, the authors of this pilot research project will disseminate the results to other educators within and outside of the business education classroom.

## Context

This research project was birthed as a necessary option during the COVID-19 pandemic when students wore masks to class and were even less engaged with the content, their classmates, and their instructor. The “Fishbowl” strategy was implemented as an alternative option for increasing student interaction, as a direct product of participation in the Association for Colleges and University Educators (ACUE) nine-month professional development course from fall 2021 to spring 2022. Up to the Spring 2022, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, students and teachers alike wore face masks to reduce the transmission of Coronavirus and all its variants. Coupled with face masks are other restrictions, such as social distancing, it was even more challenging to engage students with the content, their classmates, and the instructor. In the Business Communication - BCOM 2563 classes, students were expected to learn the content and do well, just like all other classes in their degree plan. The difference was that the instructor enrolled in a professional development class that required reflective practice during the semester. This led to rethinking and revamping classroom discussion strategies and student expectations.

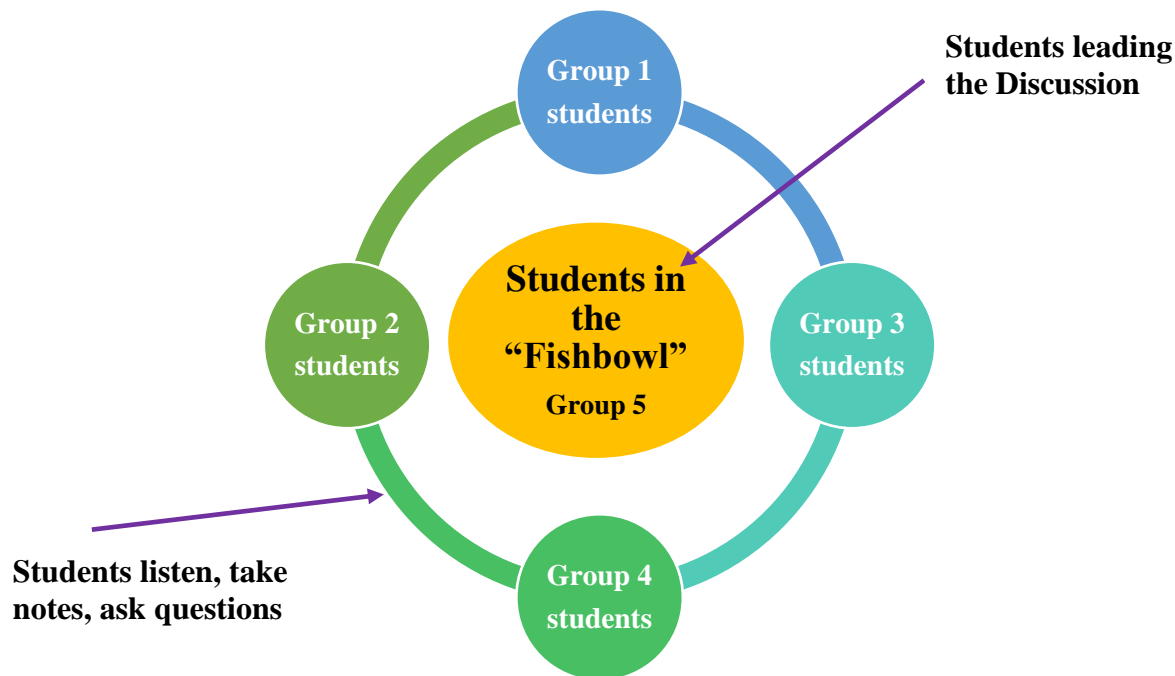
As educators, the importance and the power of active learning are at the forefront of what we do (DuFour et al., 2016). Educators want students to experience authentic, relevant, multisensory means of learning that are meaningful to students' experience. Active learning should not only be about students taking on the responsibility for their learning by being actively involved in the process rather than being passive bystanders but also about instructors engaging in reflective practice as they implement active learning strategies. However, educators may sometimes become reluctant to apply active learning principles because it can be incorrectly perceived as time-consuming for students and instructors (Ramirez-Loaiza et al., 2017). Active Learning is grounded in the constructivist-based approach to learning, whereby the emphasis is placed on the student learning from experience. This is opposite to students being seen as passive or empty vessels to be filled with knowledge from the teacher.

Active learning encourages students to discover, inquire, apply, evaluate, and create meaning. Thus, students will genuinely believe in and understand why and how meanings are developed. Furthermore, an active learning approach involves problem-making and problem-solving (Drew, 2021). Using active learning methodologies helps students and instructors rethink course expectations for involvement with content, classmates, and instructors. Students were asked to provide verbal and anonymously written feedback, using Padlet, on improving instructor teaching, inter-student interaction, and overall learning during class as part of student involvement in constructing their learning. Furthermore, the “Fishbowl” activity was piloted as an active learning strategy because of its premise of helping participants develop an open rather than closed mindset and to encourage appreciation and tolerance for disparate views (Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.). Creating a classroom environment in a business communication course engenders inclusivity and acceptance of others’ views is essential in developing business leaders open to diverse ideas and viewpoints.

**The Rationale for the “Fishbowl”**

The fundamental reason why students go to college is to learn at all levels. Active learning gives the best return on investment; therefore, this topic is significant in the Business communication course. The “Fishbowl” discussion strategy has been used extensively by the Southern Poverty Law Center in response to the need for students to have civil discourse with each other about topics that can be uncomfortable and emotionally charged. This active learning strategy divides students into inner and outer circles. Students in the inner circle are in the “Fishbowl.” Students in the outer circle are looking into the “Fishbowl” while taking notes and engaging in intrapersonal reflection on the issues presented and discussed by those inside the “Fishbowl.” See Figure 1.

**FIGURE 1  
STUDENTS IN THE “FISHBOWL”**



As shown in Figure 1, the group of students in the inner circle leads the discussion. Based on class size, students are randomized into small groups of five or six. The group numbers are written on paper strips and placed in a brown paper bag. Each group is then randomly drawn by the instructor. The first group drawn from the brown bag enters the “Fishbowl.” Students must be prepared to be in the “Fishbowl” as no one

knows until the time of the random draw who will be in the “Fishbowl.” These students are given the area of focus for the class and are expected to have thoroughly researched the topic of focus and be ready to teach and generate discussion amongst other members of their “Fishbowl” group. Conversely, students in the outer circle will listen to the discussion and take notes.

Additionally, group members outside the “Fishbowl” are expected to ask Socratic questions of those in the Fishbowl at the end of their discussion of the “Fishbowl” topic. This engaging active learning strategy is student-centered and helps students focus and engage in the lesson. It goes beyond raising the hand to answer a question. It calls for reflective, critical, and divergent thinking skills that, in essence, will build students’ comprehension of complex ideas and develop listening and discussion skills (Meierdirk, 2016). Students in the “Fishbowl” have a discussion with each other in the “Fishbowl” for a predetermined number of minutes. “Fishbowlers” may have divergent perspectives about the topic, and students are encouraged to share their perspectives along with their research.

Furthermore, observers in the outer circle ask the “Fishbowlers” questions for several minutes. After the “Fishbowlers” have answered all assigned questions, the inner circle switches out with another group from the outer circle based on a random draw from the brown paper bag. This process continues until all groups get a chance to be in the “Fishbowl.” This “Fishbowl” activity is a multimodal active learning strategy where students use multiple senses, moving from the inner to the outer circle and vice versa. Research supports using “Fishbowl” as an effective active learning strategy to engage students with various abilities and in multiple settings (Cummings, 2015; Han & Hamilton, 2021; Knoll, 2019; Priles, 1993; The Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.; Yabarmase, 2013; Yustiati et al., 2015).

Educators are always looking for effective ways to improve student learning, and the authors found that the best way to do so is through planning. The lead author was introduced to the “Fishbowl” active learning strategy during the Association for Colleges and University Educators (ACUE) nine-month effective college teaching certification program fall 2021 and the Spring 2022 semesters. The ACUE presenters demonstrated the “Fishbowl” discussion strategy to improve student engagement in the learning process. The lead author also wrote reflective notes while implementing the “Fishbowl” strategy. These reflective notes were crucial in fully understanding the process of reflection and change, with the lead author being an integral part of the active learning process. Having the regular few students participate in class discussions was tiring and boring. It served as a catalyst for changing teaching and learning that brought the instructor out of their comfort zone.

In addition, the teacher-centric lecture method transfers the students’ learning responsibility to the instructor, inadvertently making the student a consumer rather than an active participant in the teaching and learning process (Behr, 1988; Covill, 2011; Sutherland, 1976). Using the lecture method with the typical raising of hands or asking random students questions during or after the lecture was not working on engaging students in their learning. Therefore, preparation was made to introduce the “Fishbowl” method in this case study.

## **Research Design**

This study follows the case study design postulated by Yin (2002), a qualitative methodology. In qualitative research, the case study is one of the frequently used methodologies (Yazan, 2015). In the case study design, a real-time event, strategy, or phenomenon is explored within its naturally occurring context, with a strong focus on making a difference in student learning outcomes (Kaarbo & Beasley, 1999; Rashid et al., 2019). The case study took place in the spring of 2022 and consisted of one instructor with two business communications sections and 65 students. Students were divided into groups of five. Each group was given 15 guiding questions to research over two weeks.

## **Data Collection and Procedures**

The qualitative data for this case study were collected during the spring 2022 semester. Data were collected by observing two class sections of Business Communication students who were active participants in this “Fishbowl” strategy and from informal questioning regarding their experience in and outside the “Fishbowl.” The Business communication class met on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays for 50 minutes.

*First*, two weeks before implementation, students were asked to provide feedback on how to make the class more interesting and engaging. Feedback was shared informally at the start of the class and anonymously using the Padlet sharing platform. For example, some students indicated that they would prefer to do more discussions rather than lecturing, especially since the class is early in the morning, 9:00 and 10:00 AM and many of them are still “just waking up.”

*Second*, the suggestions were recorded, and after some fruitful discussions, the instructor informed the students that to facilitate more discussions and active participation in their learning, students would be sent a list of guiding questions to facilitate discussion of the next chapter in the textbook. The first topics selected for the fishbowl activity were Finding a Job and Recruiting and Selecting New Employees. Aspects of these earlier topics worked better than others. For example, areas related to bias in hiring generated greater and deeper discussions in and outside the “Fishbowl” compared to Interviewing protocols and Skills. The guiding questions were developed as totems to assist with discussions of various parts of the assigned chapter. All students were sent 15 open-ended, analytical, and opinion-based questions. Students were also provided detailed instructions on the “Fishbowl” discussion format. Students were informed that they would work with their previously established groups to respond to three of the 15 questions sent to the class. Each group had five members and five to seven minutes for the discussion. Since students were unaware of which three questions they would be assigned in the “Fishbowl,” they had to be prepared to respond to any of the 15 questions from the chapter.

*Third*, on the day of the “Fishbowl” activity, students sat in their groups when they arrived at the class. At the start of class, students were reminded of the “rules of engagement.” Then each group had to remove three questions (written on paper strips) from a brown paper bag (random draw) containing the 15 questions. Once all the groups pulled the three questions (randomly) from the brown bag, they were given three (3) minutes to discuss their responses with their group members in the interest of time.

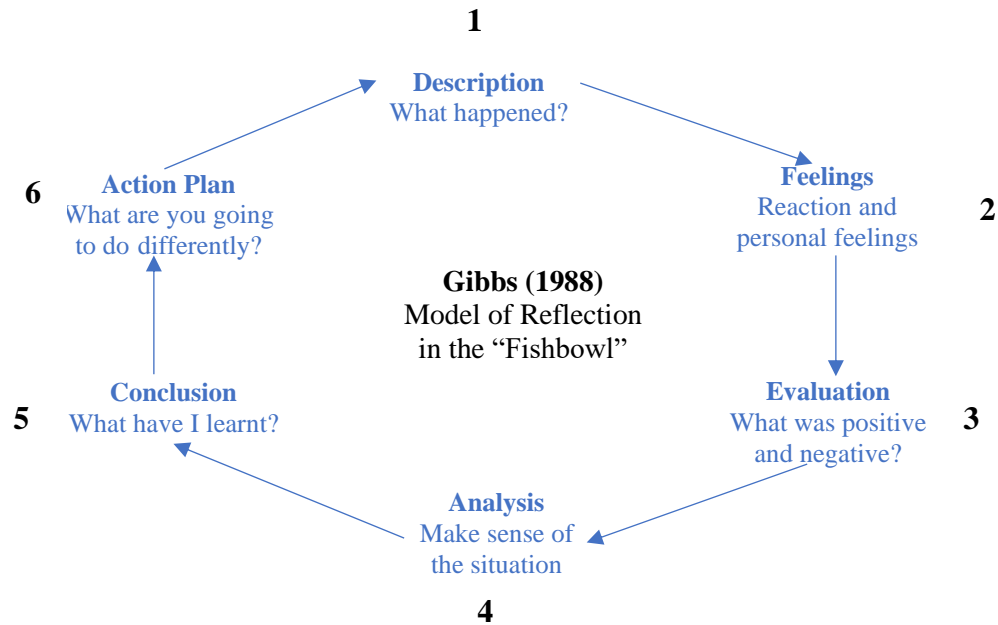
*Fourth*, after a random draw from a brown bag containing the five group numbers, the first drawn group was asked to sit in the middle of the room after three minutes of discussion. Students in the “Fishbowl” (example, group 5) had to open the discussion by responding to the three guiding questions drawn from the brown bag. After five to seven minutes of discussing the questions in the “Fishbowl,” students in the outer circle (other groups) had 3 minutes to ask the “Fishbowlers” questions. For maximum participation points, each outer group had to ask at least one question, and each inner “Fishbowl” group member had to answer at least one question. After the timer went off, the inner group traded places with members of the outer group, drawing second, third, and so on from the brown bag. Since the class was only fifty minutes, “Fishbowl” activities overlapped several class periods.

### **Findings From Reflective Analysis**

Reflective practice is not a new phenomenon in teaching and learning. However, instructors tend to emphasize ensuring student learning outcomes are achieved more than reflecting on their experience implementing the active learning strategy. Active learning by the teacher/instructor through and from lived experiences leads to new insights into oneself and one’s teaching practice (Finlay, 2008). However, reflection is not a one-off practice for effective teaching to be consistent. Reflective practice must be deliberate, purposeful, and systematic for the lessons learned to be implemented consistently (Finlay, 2008). Reflection is fundamental to effective teaching and learning but is not simplistic. The goal of reflective practice is to make the educator self-aware of one’s professional knowledge, disposition, skill set, and action that sometimes will challenge and be challenged by others. The reflective process experienced by the instructor, postulated by Gibbs (1988), captures the findings of using the “Fishbowl” strategy in a Business Communication class.

Gibbs (1988) “structured debriefing” strategy for reflective practice supports active, experiential, or learning by doing activities. There are six stages (questions) of the reflective process, as shown in Figure 2.

**FIGURE 2**  
**MODELS OF REFLECTION IN THE "FISHBOWL." ADAPTED FROM GIBBS (1988)**



As shown in Figure 2, one must address six stages or six essential questions to close the reflective practice loop (Gibbs, 1988).

**First, description—What happened?** In this pilot study, the discussion strategy was changed from the mundane teacher-centric lecture method, ‘raise your hand’ or ‘just jump in’ strategy, if you want to, to the “Fishbowl” strategy. We found that students came to class more prepared because they had the guiding questions to streamline their research before coming to class. Hence, a change of strategy from teacher-control learning to a student-centric active learning environment saw increased participation and engagement with the content and their classmates.

**Second, feelings—what were your reactions or feelings?** From an analysis of the instructor’s reflective practice notes, the lead author was more worried about issues relating to whether (1) enough time to cover the topic using the “Fishbowl” strategy – i.e., a 50-minute class, (2) would this strategy work or “be a royal flop” and (3) “what impact will this new active learning strategy have on instructor evaluations at the end of the semester and ultimately, tenure and promotion as a tenure track faculty.” There were feelings of trepidation because this “Fishbowl” active learning strategy was not tried before. Hence, the feelings about this strategy not working was very strong, and the lead author often noted that falling behind and negatively impacting tenure and promotion threatened to undermine the implementation of the uncharted “Fishbowl” student-centric teaching and learning strategy.

**Third, evaluation—What was positive and what was negative?** Upon reflection on this new active learning strategy, the positive finding was that students were excited about the teaching, accountability, and discussion format change. Students indicated in informal conversations and through anonymous feedback on our Padlet webpage that “...they felt heard” and appreciated the change in teaching and learning format. Students who did not participate in the class discussion before the “Fishbowl” teaching and learning experience were actively engaged in the “Fishbowl” concept. For example, a student indicated that “I am a shy person and find it difficult to speak in class, but the Fishbowl with the guiding questions allowed me to properly prepare before coming to class, and that made me feel less stressed, more confident and not as fearful of speaking in class.” The sentiments shared by this student were echoed by several others who actively participated for the first time after implementing the “Fishbowl” active learning strategy. The negative of using the “Fishbowl” strategy would be that each group in the “Fishbowl” had a strict and short

(5 -7 minutes) time limit to respond to the guiding questions and share their research and perspectives on the selected topic(s). Sometimes the discussions were intense and rich, but the instructor had to end the discussions abruptly because of time constraints.

**Fourth, analysis—make sense of the situation.** Sensemaking was apparent when we reflected on how students responded to this new active learning “Fishbowl” strategy. Students were more than willing to engage with the content if they could participate actively. However, we realized that over the years, students were confined to less than engaging learning activities because many instructors did not see the benefits of active engagement in many courses.

It was observed that during class, overall, students were more animated and respectful in interacting with the content, instructor, and classmates. Adopting the “Fishbowl” active learning strategy changed the power dynamics in the classroom, with a greater focus on student involvement and less on instructor control in the business education classroom. The change in classroom power dynamics also challenged the mindset of students as passive consumers in their education to have a growth and open mindset regarding the perception of their role in the teaching and learning classroom environment. Research has shown that individuals adopt and adapt to the growth mindset over a fixed mindset to experience greater levels of achievement (Hagger, 2022; Macnamara & Burgoyne, 2022; Yeager et al., 2022). Therefore, the “Fishbowl” strategy, akin to an open mindset, sets the stage for instructors and students to expand their understanding and acceptance of unfamiliar and “uncomfortable” teaching and learning methods and topics.

**Fifth, conclusion—what have you learned?** We learned that students want to be engaged in the learning process. We learned that as instructors, we often chose the lecture or other less student-involved method of teaching and learning because it keeps us as instructors in control and within our comfort zone. However, teachers must design the learning environment in a manner that is conducive to experiential learning and resist the temptation to be the ultimate “seat of knowledge” and power within the classroom. Additionally, when teachers stop blaming time constraints and plan for learning by doing, there will be deeper learning of the content within the given time frame.

Furthermore, we learned that the “Fishbowl” strategy provided an opportunity for both the instructor and the students to explore more effective methods of teaching and learning, driven by the premise of placing students at the center of their learning. We were always outside the proverbial “Fishbowl,” just monitoring the flow of the discussion and the timer. College instructors must develop a classroom environment where students engage meaningfully with the instructor, their classmates, and the content. This will help students increase their knowledge and confidence through active participation within the college classroom. Students were wearing their physical masks, and they were happy to move around the class and work closely with each other after the implementation of the “Fishbowl” strategy. This pilot case study occurred during the tail end of the COVID-19 pandemic when students and faculty were still wearing masks. However, the lessons learned and benefits from implementing the “Fishbowl” strategy apply to any college classroom.

**Sixth, action plan—what will be done differently going forward?** Going forward, we will be (1) using the “Fishbowl” strategy more often but more purposeful. The “Fishbowl” activity should be used for the most significant effect, with topics generally open to multiple views and perspectives. Hence, the “Fishbowl” activity should not be used with every topic. For example, the “Fishbowl” strategy worked better with topics with divergent perspectives and interpretations, such as discussions about social diversity, equity, inclusion, and belongingness in workplace hiring practices, integration, and the impact of digital technology on workplace communication (2) having piloted it with face-to-face students, we will adapt it for use in our online classes. Like traditional face-to-face classes, students online need opportunities for active learning. Figuring out the logistics of implementing the “Fishbowl” strategy in an asynchronous online class continues to be a challenge because of students’ time availability conflicts and university online course expectations and operations policies (3) In the future, we will reduce the number of questions students must prepare. Upon reflection, having 15 questions proved to be too many. As a result, the student’s answers were not as deep and reflective because they were racing against time. Providing students with a maximum of three guiding and two reflective questions on their experience is a better option when implementing the “Fishbowl” strategy. Additionally, increasing the time in the “Fishbowl” from five to

seven minutes in favor of 10-15 minutes per group would allow for more profound and impactful discussion and the opportunity for each group member in the “Fishbowl” to participate actively in the teaching and learning process.

## CONCLUSION

This study adds to the literature promoting active learning strategies in the Business Communication classroom by focusing on both the instructor’s and the student’s reflective and behavioral changes during implementation. In this research, the “Fishbowl” strategy/approach helped to cultivate active learning in the classroom and, in so doing, encouraged students to respond to Socratic questions, think strategically when in the “Fishbowl,” maintain an active learning posture by expounding on the complexity of the question posed, and produced a deeper understanding of the issue when students were in the “hot seat” or “Fishbowl,” and having the ability to dig deeper into the issues raised.

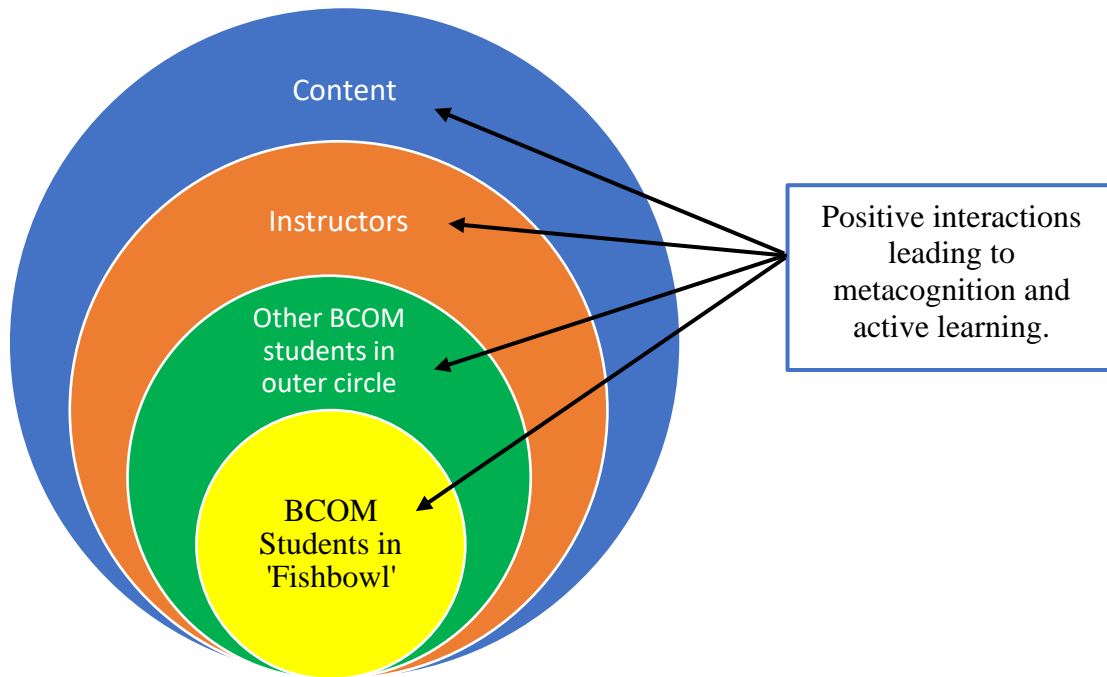
The use of active learning strategies such as the “Fishbowl” in this research was important for students to be prepared to become business leaders in the future. Students actively listen to speakers and respond intelligently to the question. Thus, students learn from each other as each student sparks ideas from the other students in an active, reflective, and engaging manner. Business Communication students need to be encouraged to work with others collaboratively, and the “Fishbowl” active learning strategy is complementary to the 21st-century workplace. In this research, the “Fishbowl” strategy is predicated on collaboration. Students had to work with each other by listening, utilizing best practices in communication, and drawing on the support of group members.

Reflective practice is a powerful tool to help participants question and understand their worldviews (Meierdirk, 2016). This reflective practice changed how instructors approach active learning. The focus is not only on the student as a learner but also on the instructor as they navigate the changes to the expected behaviors and the impact on their psychological well-being. Unlike traditional methods of instruction, the “Fishbowl” strategy emphasizes what the learner does, thinks, and behaves. Students’ voices were heard, and appropriate changes were made to have students participate in the learning process.

This research further shows that active learning is not based on simple instructions but well throughout processes and procedures and reflective practice by both the instructor and the student. Active learning occurs when the instructor shows commitment to the learners by planning enough time to execute this active learning activity effectively. Learning is tailored to the needs of the students. This research shows that the “Fishbowl” active learning process facilitates high-impact, student-centric communication. The “Fishbowl” strategy helps students build an open rather than closed mindset, strengthening their content and collaboration appreciation of “hot seat” issues and improving listening skills and understanding rather than emphasizing memorization. The “Fishbowl” gives students confidence in their learning because of the autonomy they experience when participating in this active learning strategy. Finally, this research showed that the “Fishbowl” strategy placed business communication students at the center of the learning process, resulting in positive interactions with each other, the content, and the instructor, as shown in Figure 3.



**FIGURE 3**  
**THE POSITIVE INTERACTION OF BCOM STUDENTS WITH**  
**PEERS, INSTRUCTORS, AND CONTENT**



**Implications for Practice**

This interactive “Fishbowl” strategy in a business education course has implications for practice. *First*, simply asking business communication students to utilize the “Fishbowl” strategy does not yield differences in teacher and student learning outcomes. For the instructor to implement such a strategy, there must be quality planning and preparation—a solid effort to ensure that business education instructors can get sustained and content-focused professional development, such as was delivered in the Association for Colleges and University Educators (ACUE) nine-month effective college teaching certification program. Therefore, implementing active learning strategies is just as important as training on effectively using such a strategy. The implementation plan must consider the activity’s purpose, the time needed to execute the activity successfully, the time for debriefing and reflective practice, and the desired outcome for using the “Fishbowl.”

*Second*, active learning strategies such as the “Fishbowl” can be implemented in ways that allow for creativity and the ability for students to monitor and adjust comfort levels and for coherence between faculty and students as well as students and students. Finally, as presented in this manuscript, the “Fishbowl” strategy calls for close collaboration among the participants, and this strategy must be experienced and refined several times to be implemented successfully over time. The “Fishbowl” strategy works best when students respond to the guiding questions provided thoughtfully and authentically and reflect on the active learning process. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (n.d.), after completing each “Fishbowl” activity, instructors should facilitate a debriefing activity where students can reflect on the experience of being inside and outside the “Fishbowl.” They suggest the following questions as conversation starters to get students to reflect on their experience in the “Fishbowl.”

**TABLE 1**  
**“FISHBOWL” SUGGESTED CONVERSATION STARTERS**

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- 1) What did you observe while discussing the issues/topics in the “Fishbowl?”
  - 2) What is one thing you heard that is similar to your point of view?
  - 3) What was one thing with which you disagreed or were unclear about?
  - 4) How did you feel while on the outside of the “Fishbowl?”
  - 5) What helped you understand the shared information (context or non-verbal cues, body language, etc.)
  - 6) How did it feel to share your feelings/thinking about the issues discussed, knowing that your peers were listening closely?
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Adapted From the Southern Poverty Law Center

As shown in Table 1, these guiding questions helped extend the conversations on the issues shared in the “Fishbowl” and inculcate the habit of reflective practice as part of the student’s learning process. During the pilot study, an official debriefing of each “Fishbowl” activity was not done, which is a study limitation.

### **Limitations and Further Research**

This pilot study aims to explore using the “Fishbowl” active learning strategy with business communication students in one mid-south university. These results cannot be generalized to posit that all students maintain the knowledge gained from this activity or that all students found this activity beneficial. Students likely had a different feeling in the “Fishbowl” versus outside the “Fishbowl.” Research that specifically asks students to comment on their experiences in and outside the “Fishbowl” must be conducted.

The Southern Poverty Law Center (n.d.) reflective practice guiding questions, noted above, would be an effective baseline to understand better the value students perceive using the “Fishbowl” active learning strategy. Our research will further explore instructors’ experiences while implementing active learning strategies such as the “Fishbowl.” In addition, this research was focused on self-report from students that was a convenient sampling of students taking a business communication course from a single instructor.

Future research can include sampling students from multiple instructors and universities where business communication or other business education courses are taught. Additionally, conducting survey research to get students’ and instructors’ feedback on the effectiveness of the “Fishbowl” strategy should be explored. Finally, based on the qualitative nature of the “Fishbowl” strategy, conducting focus group interviews with students and instructors would yield valuable insights and information from participants regarding the benefits of using interactive teaching strategies in the business communication/education classroom.

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