



INQUIRY FIELD GUIDE

*20+ PRACTICAL STRATEGIES AND
PROTOCOLS TO PROMPT QUESTIONS
AND FACILITATE INVESTIGATIONS*

Concentric Circles

The What

Concentric Circles get students talking to different classmates, allowing them to hear from a variety of perspectives in response to a series of prompts. This protocol fosters understanding of different perspectives while promoting students' speaking and listening skills.

The How

1. Students form 2 circles of equal number: 1 inside circle and 1 outside circle.
 - Pair each student on the inside with a student on the outside, and have them face each other.
2. Pose a discussion question to the whole group, and have pairs discuss their responses with each other.
 - The question may be opinion-based, a challenge to review a previously covered piece of content, or an open-ended prompt that sparks student thinking for an upcoming activity.
3. After a few minutes of discussion, signal for the circles to rotate a certain number of spaces (ex. "Inside, 2 to the left!" or "Outside, 3 to the right!") and pose a new question.
4. Repeat the protocol as desired for several questions, making sure that students end up in different pairs each time.
5. End the protocol by having the class come back together to reflect and debrief.
 - Ask students to share a comment they heard during the activity with which they agree.
 - Students share what went well and identify opportunities for improvement.
 - Use this opportunity to set group goals for future collaborative discussions.