**Fishbowl Discussion**

**Instructions**

Each group will sit in the centre of the room for an intelligent and open discussion of its chosen lens prompt. Many opinions will be presented, supported, and refuted, and once the discussion is over, the audience is expected to ask questions and extend. The fishbowl is an opportunity to grapple with some of the larger themes in the play by making connections to your life, and the world around us.

**Preparation**

Most of the preparation can be done independently. Go through the text, and find specific evidence that pertains to your lens question. Brainstorm ideas about your topic, and do additional research to find facts, statistics, or real life examples that support your arguments. Think of counter arguments others in your group may present. Don’t be afraid to play ‘devil’s advocate’. Make a list of questions/ talking points you want to bring up during the fishbowl discussion, and rehearse it in your head or out loud. Lastly, it is up to you and your group whether or not you choose to practice the fishbowl discussion before you do it in class. Remember, it should be a natural discussion, and does not need to be memorized.

**Requirements**

* The fishbowl discussion should be about **10-15 minutes** long. Discussions will be stopped at 15 minutes. The first \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ minutes of the discussion must be specific to the text. After that the teacher will interrupt, and allow you to extend the discussion to the world around us.
* **Each member** is required to speak **at least 3 times**. This must be the actual sharing of an idea, not just “Yes, I agree”.
* At the end, your group will pose **one question** to the class that students will respond to in their journal. It helps if it is an open-ended question.
* Use discussion etiquette to add ideas, refute ideas, and interrupt a speaker.

**Useful Phrases Used in Discussion**

Expressing an Opinion

* In my opinion . . .
* I believe . . .

Figure - While Group A is discussing, the observers (Group B) are taking notes, and will have a chance to comment and question at the end.

* Personally, I feel/think . . .
* Not everyone will agree with me, but . . .

Adding to an Idea

* I agree, and I’d like to add . . .
* I would like to expand on that by saying . . .
* In addition to that . . .

Disagreeing respectfully

* I see your point, but I disagree with . . . because
* I can’t agree with . . . because
* On the other hand . . .
* I doubt that because . . .
* My evidence suggests the opposite. For example . . .

Asking for clarification

* Can you repeat your last point please?
* Can you give a specific example to support your claim?
* I’m not sure I understand your point. Can you restate it using different words.

\*\*For more of these type of phrases used in discussion, go to this website or our class portal. <http://www.nsknet.or.jp/~peterrs/zemi/kiso_seminar_phrases.html#Starting%20a%20discussion>

Lenses Prompts

**Gender**

* Are the domestic and social roles of women equal to men in *Hamlet*? How does Shakespeare’s portrayal of women compare to the reality of women in Malaysian society now?
* How are male and female stereotypes reinforced or undermined in Hamlet? Do these stereotypes still exist in our present-day society? How have gender stereotypes affected your life?

**Psychoanalytical**

* Explore the inner conflicts characters in the play experience while in pursuit of their goals (make reference to Freudian theory). How much do fictional characters resemble the inner working of real human minds?
* Discuss how family dynamics influences characters’ actions and decisions in the text. Based on the text, is family a positive or negative force? How has your family influenced your behaviour and decisions?
* Discuss the coping mechanisms Hamlet uses to deal with the events of his life. Are they effective? What would you have done in Hamlet’s situation? Which coping mechanisms do you find most effective in your life? Explain.

**Marxist**

* In relation to Shakespeare’s time period, how would the bourgeoisies and the working class people have viewed the play differently? Using recent popular films/novels, discuss how these texts reinforce or subvert hegemonic power.
* What comments/criticism does Shakespeare make about the possession of power? Analyzing recent political/economic affairs, has the use of power for good/evil changed since Shakespeare’s time period?

**Archetypal**

* Discuss character/situational/symbolic archetypes that are present in *Hamlet*, and its significance to the play. If you were hired to re-write the play for a modern-day Malaysian audience, which archetypes would you omit or replace? Explain your choices.
* Which character archetype best fits Hamlet: hero, anti-hero, tragic hero? Can Hamlet be considered a role model for young men and women to look up to?