Fishbowl

Teacher-student partnership: Explicitly model how to “talk with a partner.”

Teacher sits across from a student (partner) with the remainder of the class surrounding them. Students observe and listen to the teacher and the “partner” model how to have a discussion in partner work. It is helpful to provide the observing students with a focus question(s), i.e. What does my partner do that demonstrates she is listening to me?” What do we do that shows we are respectful of each other’s ideas?” What do you notice our bodies doing while we are working together?” “What do we do that demonstrates that we have understood what our partner said?”

Observations students might make:

* Partners ask clarifying questions
* Help me understand why you did this…
* Active listening body language: eye contact, nodding head, facing each other, not fidgeting, etc…
* Acknowledge your partner’s idea and add to it
* Restate your partner’s idea in your own words, i.e. “Is this what you are saying…?”
* Ask questions about your partner’s strategy
* Identify your partners strategy and compare it to another strategy
* Ask your partner how they found the answer to the problem.
* Explain why you think your answer is accurate
* Ask you partner if they can explain your thinking
* Help each other stay on task by refocusing on the problem when the discussion has gone astray.

Suggestion: Generate a class list, poster or chart listing the students’ noticings and expectations for partner work. How should students listen to each other, ask questions, disagree respectfully, focus on the task or problem, manage time…?