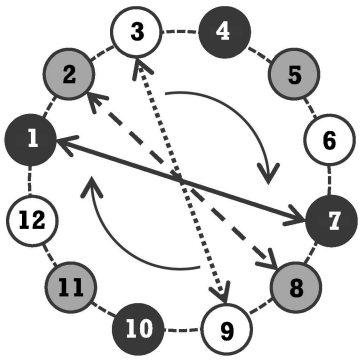
# Circular interviewing

**How?**

Organize your students into a circle (either the full group or a subset if you want to shorten the activity).




One student (number 1 in the figure) interviews the student opposite (number 7) about an agreed topic for a minute or two. The roles then rotate one place clockwise such that student 2 interviews student 8. Continue rotating until everyone has taken both roles.

Circular interviewing can involve themes such as:

**Find out what the interviewee has read that throws light on…**
**Find out what the interviewee would really like to discuss today.**
**Find out what questions the interviewee would like to be answered today.**

**When?**

More useful early in a class as a way of prompting further discussion as a whole group.

Be careful about timing: If you do this with a larger group, then it can take a long time and may become dull.

Also note that it gets harder for students to come up with good questions as they move around the circle. While tricky, this may prove a good way to generate thought-provoking discussion questions for later in the class, rather than discussing only more basic questions that are easily resolved.

**Why?**

- Circular interviewing has the advantage of making students focus on each other. In comparison, rounds (see separate document) tend to lead students to address the professor each time.
- This activity also requires full participation, and everyone's voice is heard.

Source: Gibbs, G. (1995). *Discussion with more students*. Oxford, UK: Oxford Centre for Staff Development.